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ABSTRACT

This study guide is designed for those with varying levels of understanding to open possible contexts to consider Malcolm X and develop some of the critical thinking skills necessary to make sense out of any complex historical phenomena and to suggest to students some directions for further research. The guide uses the "Autobiography of Malcolm X" as a primary source to understand the man's growth and development and as a window onto social and economic conditions of black America. It also uses excerpts from his speeches to reveal some of his general positions and to suggest how they changed. To shed light on historical context, the guide uses quotes, graphs, and charts as well as excerpts from historical documents including the Kerner Commission Report of 1967, court decisions, and organizational charters. Exercises provide practice for basic skills and critical thinking. Topics include American democracy and the black condition, the Dred Scott Decision of 1857, the radical black tradition, the autobiography of Malcolm X, the exploited Malcolm Little (1925-1941), the exploiter Detroit Red (1941-1952), creating communities and recognizing power, the self-emancipator Minister Malcolm X (1952-1964), Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., women's roles, Malcolm on education, decade of protest, programs for black self-determination, the Black Panther's 10-point plan, and the program of the Nation of Islam. Contains 28 references. (JB)

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We are not fighting for integration,
nor are we fighting for separation.
We are fighting for recognition
as human beings. We are fighting
for the right to live
as humans in this society.

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MALCOLM X IN CONTEXT:
A Study Guide to the Man & His Times

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Note: *The best way to respect Malcolm X is to read his work in a very serious and careful way. Then, we need to have an open and honest debate about his ideas in the 1960s and about our own ideas right now. Our greatest challenge is to follow Malcolm X's method of critical independent thinking.*

Special Thanks to Abdul Alkilmat, whose rich and limitless work laid the starting point for this work and and shaped much of what it became.

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On the Cover: Malcolm X and Langston Hughes

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Why Study Malcolm X?

IN ALL CORNERS OF THE COUNTRY you can see young African-Americans wearing the symbols and image of Malcolm X. The "X" baseball caps are *de rigeur* in almost all African-American communities, as are t-shirts bearing his image or a quote. Young and old alike are wearing, with obvious pride, references to this great black man. Why do they do this? Because as Ossie Davis said in his eulogy, in affirming him they are affirming the best in themselves. The release of Spike Lee's *Malcolm X* has brought renewed interest in the life of this great and little understood man and in the historical circumstances that shaped him.

Joseph Campbell, noted writer on the role of myth in society, has said that a hero or heroine is someone who has done something beyond the normal range of achievement and experience. A hero is someone who has given their life to something bigger than themself. Campbell defines two types of heroic deeds. "One is the physical deed in which the hero performs a courageous act in battle or saves a life. The other kind is the spiritual deed, in which the hero learns to experience the supernormal range of spiritual life and then comes back with a message."

Not only does Malcolm X offer us lessons from a spiritual journey of heroic magnitude; he stands as a role model for all of us, especially for those who might need to make that same journey. For more and more of our youth, the transformation into a productive, engaged member of democratic society can only begin with a journey into the inner recesses of their being to renounce the chains that are holding them back from realizing their own potential.

As Paulo Friere, the Brazilian popular educator, has said, "Those who have been denied their primordial rights to speak their own words must first reclaim that right." Students turn to Malcolm X because he spoke with extraordinary force and clarity on the depth of black rage and black pain in American; and because Malcolm, more than any other person, slew the dragons of self-hatred which had made any idea of black self-worth or self-love impossible.

In particular, Malcolm X gives students — including those who may not be Black or Latino — new and powerful tools to answer the following questions: Who am I? Who were my ancestors? Where have they been? Where am I going? What does it mean to be Black or Latino or White or Chinese, American or not, male or female, in contemporary America?

For students, like for Malcolm, personal experiences must be the starting point to study history, to acquire literacy, to acquire the competencies necessary for self and social emancipation. For black and Latino students, this means beginning with personal experiences of racism in day to day life. Why? Because for many students in US society today, racism is the organizing principle of social existence, role assignments, life chances, and patterns of interaction. It is the starting point for examining self and society.

Malcolm X has been elevated to something akin to sainthood by African Americans because his journey, accomplishments and his ultimate death **defined** heroism for millions of black youth. He was, as Ossie Davis said at his funeral, "a prince, a black shining prince." Malcolm X was an unfinished work at the time of his assassination. His ideas were undergoing an intense process of reevaluation and refinement. No one can say which direction Malcolm would have eventually taken. It is our sincere belief that we must use the heroic adventure that his life represented as a point of departure to facilitate for our students the process of coming to terms with social forces and locating themselves in history.

How To Use This Guide

This Malcolm X Study guide is designed for those with varying levels of understanding of circumstances or of the historical context of Malcolm X's life. However, it intends in no way to be some sort of *Cliff's Notes*, that would offer up some expert information for passive absorption. We hope rather to open possible contexts within which Malcolm X can be considered, to develop some of the critical thinking skills necessary to make sense out any complex historical phenomena, and to suggest to students some directions for further research. As such, it should serve as only a starting point for further research. This intention allows it to be adapted into broader courses, including American history, language arts, social studies, to name just a few. The great breadth of the issues that Malcolm X discussed, the variety of his language, the influence that he had as an individual and through the movements that he was part of — all of this makes Malcolm X an important figure to consider from any number of different perspectives. What you study, what resources you use, might be different depending on the context in which you choose to study him.

Our purpose is twofold: One is to prepare teachers and students with the factual and historical base to discuss and to guide research into the conditions that shaped Malcolm's development. We hope to familiarize you with a continuing Black Radical Tradition, which Malcolm X drew on and furthered. We hold that he also represents a most important figure in American history, by fighting unconditionally for freedom and justice. He must also be seen within the context of the turbulent 1960s.

Our second purpose is to provide a context — in showing examples of historical precedent, and in giving students opportunities to express themselves without preconceptions about propriety or acceptability — for some authentic expression of self.

Within our commitment to provide resources and tools for exploration, the diversity of the historical record, as well as the wealth of resources for study that Malcolm X himself provides, has required us to sacrifice a bit of order and consistency for something that we hope is more meaningful. We apologize for any confusion. It is worse to pretend to offer authoritative "answers" than to admit the unfinished business of research and inquiry and to present relevant materials, no matter how divergent they may at first appear. This is what has guided our organization of information. To assist you in navigating them, here is a general categorization of the materials presented here.

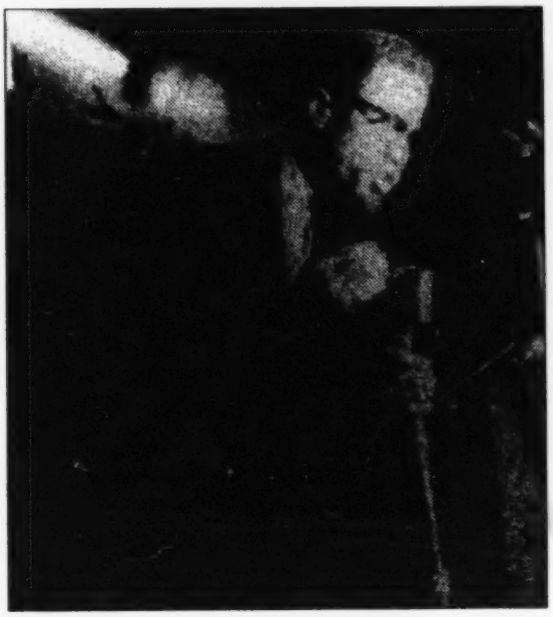
- The ***Autobiography of Malcolm X*** serves as a primary source to understand this man's growth and development and a window onto social and economic conditions of black America.
- Excerpts from his **speeches** reveal some of his general positions and suggest how they changed.
- To shed light on historical context, we use **quotes**, **graphs** and **charts**, and excerpts from **historical documents** including the Kerner Commission Report, court decisions, and organizational charters.
- **Exercises** provide practice for basic skills and critical thinking.

All materials can be examined for the information that they present — and we include exercises such as reading comprehension and graphic interpretation to help. But more important are the opportunities they provide for comparison and analysis. Certainly, Malcolm X, the Civil Rights movement, American history, can all bear up under whatever scrutiny you submit them to.

Remember that Malcolm X always tackled whatever situation he was in critically, analytically, always reflecting on what it meant for him, what it held for him, how he responded to it. These are the tactics that made him adapt himself and change his own conditions. These are the tactics we must develop for ourselves. This guide, like everything should be used to raise questions and set you off into directions that you might not have considered before. Read the *Autobiography*; read Malcolm X's speeches and newspaper articles. Use a library. Look at your own experiences. **And never stop thinking.**

Malcolm X on American Democracy and the Black Condition

In demanding equality and justice,
Malcolm X took his place among the greatest of Americans.



According to what we were taught from the white man's textbooks in school, the Revolutionary War and the Civil War were two wars fought on American soil supposedly for freedom and democracy. But if these two wars were really fought for freedom and human dignity of all men, why are 20 million of our people still confined and enslaved here in America by second-class citizenship? The truth is that the Revolutionary War was fought on American soil to free the American white man from the English white man. The Revolutionary War was never fought to provide freedom and democracy in this white country for the Black man. Our people remained slaves here in America even after the Declaration of Independence was signed. In fact most of the white Founding Fathers who signed the Declaration of Independence were slave owners themselves.

Malcolm X
October 11, 1963

The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line.

W.E.B. Du Bois
1903

When the Constitution said "all men are created equal," it wasn't talking about niggers.

J.B. Stoner
White Supremecist, 1961

We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends...when a long train of abuses and usurpations...evinces a design to reduce men under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.

The Declaration of Independence
July 4, 1776

Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several States... according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three-fifths of all other persons.

The Constitution of the United States of America (Article I, Section 2)
1789

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What are the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments?

Malcolm says that the current problems of blacks have their roots in the fact that the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments weren't enacted sincerely. What do you think about this?

The Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments were other acts by white liberals that didn't solve our problems because if they were enacted in sincerity, we wouldn't have the problems today. Then you have nine more hypocrites posing as Supreme Court justices; [they] came up with the so-called desegregation decision in 1954, which was nothing but a doctrine of hypocrisy because those judges, who were masters of the English language and phraseology, if they really wanted the black man to be desegregated in this country, would have worded that decision [in a way that] would have made it impossible for the crackers in the South to sidestep it.

....The Emancipation Proclamation wasn't designed to free the Negro. If it was, we would be free. We wouldn't still be around here begging for civil rights.

...Lincoln was a hypocrite who wasn't interested in freeing the black people. He was posing as a liberal. He was interested in saving the Union and he said that if he could keep them slaves and save the Union, he would keep them slaves, and if he had to let them go to save the Union, he would let them go....He was interested in perpetuating the power of the white man.

May 1963

Think of an example of a law that you, or someone you know, or someone you've read about, has "sidestepped." Would it have been possible to word that law differently, to make it impossible to sidestep?

Check your American history textbook for how they describe the Thirteenth and Fourteenth amendments. Underline the words that make Malcolm X's perspective different from the authors' of your textbook. Find evidence for each of their perspectives.

Name the steps Malcolm identifies here as necessary to build a satisfying community. Discuss how to carry out Malcolm X's program at the grassroots level.

The political philosophy of Black nationalism means that the Black man should control the politics and the politicians in his own community....The economic philosophy of Black nationalism is pure and simple. It only means that we should control the economy of our community....The social philosophy of Black nationalism only means that we have to get together and remove the evils, the vices — alcoholism, drug addiction, and other evils — that are destroying the moral fiber of our community. We ourselves have to lift the level of our community, the standard of our community, to a higher level, make our own society beautiful so that we will be satisfied....We've got to change our own minds about each other. We have to see each other with new eyes. We have to see each other as brothers and sisters. We have to come together with warmth so we can develop unity and harmony that's necessary to get this problem solved ourselves...if we see fit then to form a Black nationalist party, we'll form a Black nationalist party. If it's necessary to form a Black nationalist army, we'll form a Black nationalist army. It'll be the ballot or the bullet. It'll be liberty or it'll be death.

April 1964

What other famous American uttered the words, "liberty or death"? Under what circumstances?

Over the last 25 years, black people have organized to elect black mayors, state legislators and congressional representatives. Discuss these changes — consider who benefits and whose life remains the same or even worsens.

Changes in the Slave Codes from 1818 to 1848

Law	State(s)	Year
Free Blacks may not enter the state.	GE, SC, MS NC, TN, VA	By 1818
Free Blacks leaving the state may not return.	SC	1822
Black seamen must be imprisoned while their ships are in port.	SC	1822
Death Penalty for publishing material that may incite a slave rebellion.	GA VA	1829 1847-48
Death Penalty for inciting a slave rebellion.	SC GA TN VA	1822 1829 1835 1847
Circulation of anti-slavery literature prohibited.	NC MS VA	1830 1830 1836
Slaves may not learn to read or write.	NC VA GE	1830 1831 1834
Slaves may not preach.	NC VA GE	1831 1832 1833
Death Penalty for assisting an escaped slave.	NC	1832

Looking at Charts

On a map of the United States identify which states added which provisions to their state codes.

Alabama is a southern state that does not appear in this chart. Refer to your map again and think of reasons why this might be.

What three things do these additions control?

What might have provoked the four additions about literature between 1829 and 1836? (Look at page 8 for a clue)

Which region had the largest shift in Klan membership from 1922 to 1924? the largest increase? the largest decrease?

What region was Malcolm X's family living in during this period? Did this region see an increase in Klan members? Why do you think this is so?

Make pie charts for each year.

Distribution of Klan Membership by Region

Region	1922	1924
North Central (IN, OH, IL)	6.4%	40.2%
Southwest (TX, OK, AR, LA, NM, AZ)	61.0%	25.6%
South (All states East of the Mississippi River, South from KT & WV)	22.2%	16.1%
Midwest (MN, IO, NB, KS, MO, MI, ND)	5.0%	8.3%
West (OR, CA, ID, UT, WA, CO, WY)	5.1%	6.1%
North Atlantic (NY, DE, NJ, PA, MD, & New England)	0.3%	3.7%
	100%	100%

Looking at Historical Documents

How did the Dred Scott Decision limit how a slave could be free?

How did the Decision increase the power of the slave owner?

Dred Scott Decision, 1857

Now...the right or property in a slave is distinctly and expressly affirmed in the constitution. The right to traffic in it, like an ordinary article of merchandise and property, was guaranteed to the citizens of the United States, in any state that might desire it, for twenty years. And the government in express terms is pledged to protect it....

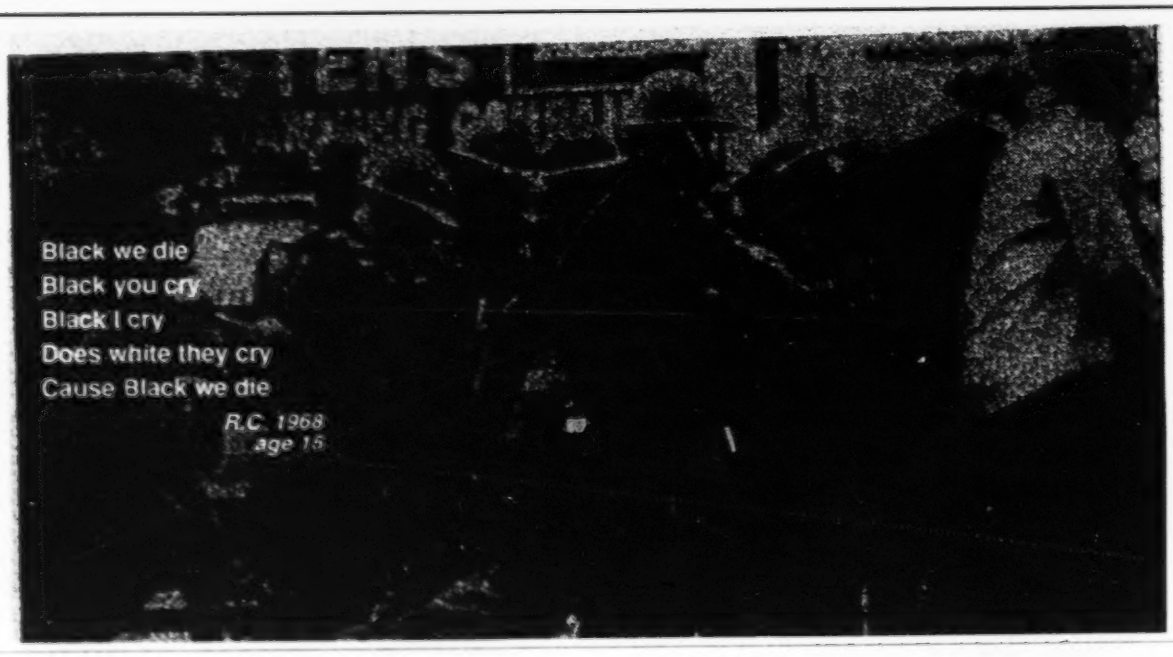
Upon these considerations, it is the opinion of the court that the act of Congress (the Missouri Compromise Act of 1820) which prohibited a citizen from holding and owning property of this kind in the territory of the United States north of the line therein mentioned, is not warranted by the constitution, and is therefore void; and that neither Dred Scott nor any of his family, were made free by being carried into this territory; even if they had been carried there by the owner, with the intention of becoming a permanent resident.

"*A Negro has no rights a white man is bound to respect.*"

Chief Justice Roger B Taney, 1857

Comment on the above quote. Consider what position this man held, what his duties and powers were within this position. Argue your commentary from the point of view of Malcolm or of an author of your American history textbook. Is his decision consistent with the Constitution as it was originally written? as it is today? Why?

- If, as Malcolm says on the preceeding page, the American revolution and the Civil war were fought for democracy and freedom, then why was it so hard for Blacks to secure those rights?
- Read the section from the Constitution on page 4 aloud. Who are "free persons"? Who are "all other persons"? Who are "those bound to service for a term of years"? Why do they exclude "Indians not taxed"?
- Why was the Missouri compromise enacted?
- Is Malcolm's often quoted phrase to get freedom "by any means necessary" consistent with the Constitution? with the Declaration of Independence?



Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall
Miracle at Philadelphia

1987 marks the 200th anniversary of the United States Constitution....Like many anniversary celebrations, the plan for 1987 takes particular events and holds them up as the source of all the very best that has followed. Patriotic feelings will surely swell, prompting proud proclamations of the wisdom, foresight, and sense of justice shared by the Framers and reflected in a written document now yellowed with age....The focus of this celebration invites a complacent belief that the vision of those who debated and compromised in Philadelphia yielded the "more perfect union" it is said we now enjoy.

I cannot accept this invitation, for I do not believe that the meaning of the Constitution was forever "fixed" at the Philadelphia Convention. Nor do I find the wisdom, foresight, and sense of justice exhibited by the Framers particularly profound. To the contrary, the government they devised was defective form the start, requiring several amendments, a civil war, and momentous social transformation to attain the system of constitutional government, and its respect for the individual freedoms and human rights, we hold as fundamental today. When contemporary Americans cite "The Constitution," they invoke a concept that is vastly different from what the Framers barely began to construct two centuries ago.

...These omissions [of the majority of Americans from the Constitution] were intentional. The record of the Framers' debate on the slave question is especially clear: the Southern States acceded to the demands of the New England States for giving Congress broad powers to regulate commerce, in exchange for the right to continue the slave trade. The economic interests of the regions coalesced: New Englanders engaged in the "carrying trade" would profit from transporting slaves from Africa as well as goods produced in America by slave labor. The perpetuation of slavery ensured the primary source of wealth in the Southern States.

...No doubt it will be said, when the unpleasant truth of the history of slavery in America is mentioned during this bicentennial year, that the Constitution is a product of its times, and embodied a compromise which, under other circumstances, would not have been made. But the effects of the Framers' compromise have remained for generations. They arose form the contradiction between guaranteeing liberty and justice for all, and denying both to Negroes.

...And so we must be careful, when focusing on the events which took place in Philadelphia two centuries ago, that we not overlook the momentous events which followed, and thereby lose our proper sense of perspective. Otherwise, the odds are that for many Americans the bicentennial celebration will be little more than a blind pilgrimage to the shrine of the original document....If we seek, instead, a sensitive understanding of the Constitution's defects, and its promising evolution through 200 years of history...[w]e will see that the true miracle was not the birth of the Constitution, but its life, a life nurtured through two turbulent centuries of our own making, and a life embodying much good fortune that was not.

Maui, Hawaii, 1987

Reading for Understanding

What does Justice Marshall point to as defective in our government as originally devised?

What amendments is he referring to? What periods of "momentous social transformation"? What compromise?

What does he mean when he says "the effects of the Framers' compromise have remained for generations"?

What does he say is the true miracle of the Constitution?

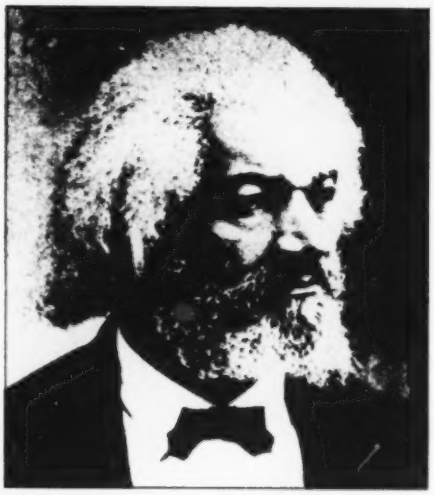
Justice Marshall opposes two ways of celebrating the Constitution: one as a finished act in the past; the other as a document whose flaws led our country through its history. Underline all the phrases he uses to describe each way of seeing the Constitution and write them in two separate groups. Think of titles for each group of words. Look at your history textbook and consider how it describes the Constitution.

Which way of seeing this document does he say is more meaningful?

Find the entire text from this speech. Justice Marshall talks about two people. Who are they? What do they represent?

Malcolm X & the The Radical Black Tradition

Malcolm X was a living representative of a great radical tradition of struggle created by millions of people whose names we will never know.



If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand.

Frederick Douglass

ARMED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE of the past, we can with confidence charter a course for our future. Culture is an indispensable weapon in the freedom struggle. We must take hold of it and forge the future with the past.

OAAU Charter

A child born under oppression has all the elements of servility in its constitution.

Martin Delany

You had better all die — die immediately, than live as slaves and entail your wretchedness upon your posterity.

Henry Highland Garnet

Can our condition be any worse? — can it be any more mean and abject? If there are changes, will they not be for the better, though they may appear for the worse at first?...[M]y motive is, if possible, to awaken in the breasts of my afflicted, degraded and slumbering brethren, a spirit of inquiry and investigation respecting our miseries and wretchedness in this *Republican Land of Liberty!!!!!!*

David Walker

When we have a race of men whom this blood-stained government cannot tempt or flatter, who would sternly refuse every office in this nation's gift, from a president down to a tide-waiter, then for us the foundations of an historic character will have been laid.

Frances Harper

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That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over mud-puddles, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or give me any place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me. Look at my arm. I have plowed and planted and gathered into barns and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman?

Sojourner Truth

I had reasoned this out in my mind; there was one or two things I had a *right* to, liberty or death; if I could not have one, I would have the other; for no man should take me alive; I should fight for my liberty as long as my strength lasted, and when the time come for me to go, the Lord would take me.

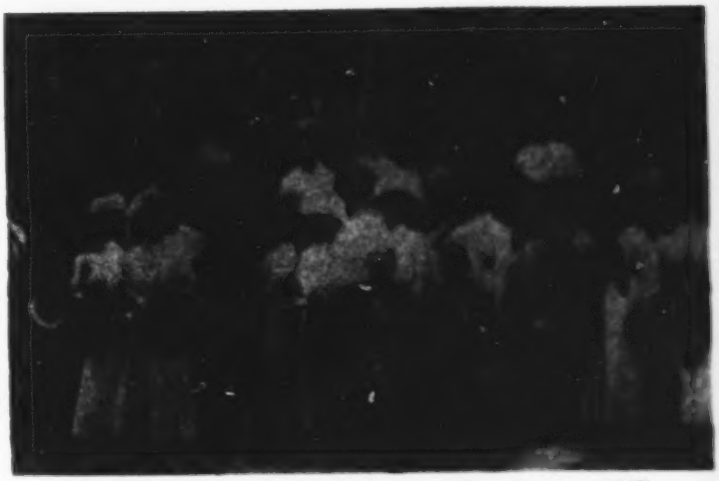
Harriet Tubman

I, young in life, by seeming cruel fate
Was snatch'd from Afric's fancy'd seat.

Phyllis Wheatley

If we must die — let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot.

Claude McKay



The Niagra Movement's 3rd national conference, 1907.

History is the landmark by which we are directed into the true course of life. The history of a movement, the history of a nation, the history of a race is the guide-post of that movement's destiny, that nation's destiny, that race's destiny. What you do today that is worthwhile, inspires others to act at some future time.

Marcus Garvey

Negro action can be decisive. I say that we ourselves have the power to end the terror and to win for ourselves peace and security throughout the land.

Paul Robeson

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Listening to the Past

Identify each of the people quoted in the preceding two pages. What are they known for? What was their contribution to political thought? What were their practical contributions?

In what ways does Malcolm X continue the Radical Black Tradition? In what ways does he change it or take it in new directions?

What conditions does David Walker see his brethren in? What does he propose as a solution?

Frederick Douglass uses a series of analogies for wanting freedom without tolerating agitation. What are the analogies? Can you think of three more analogies? Compare Douglass' position to Malcolm X's; to Martin Luther King's.

What does Frances Harper refer to when she says the government "tempts and flatters" men? Can you infer how she would feel about integration and segregation from this statement?

What does Martin Delany mean in his quote? Do you think this is true today? Can you think of examples that support his idea? that contradict it?

What does Harriet Tubman claim as her rights in the quote here? Who else on these pages poses the same ultimatum? What other famous Americans have posed it?

Tableau

Locked arm in arm they cross the way,
The black boy and and the white,
The golden splendor of the day
The sable pride of night.

From lowered blinds the dark folk stare,
And here the fair folk talk,
Indignant that these two should dare
In unison to walk.

Oblivious to look and word
They pass, and see no wonder
That lightning brilliant as a sword
Should blaze the path of thunder.

Countee Cullen

Looking at Language

When do you think this poem might have been written? Explain.

Where do you think the scene depicted in this poem took place? Why?

Do you agree with the ideas in this poem? Why or why not?

Who is this poem written to?

Studying *The Autobiography of Malcolm X:*

The Text and the Tradition

THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT BOOKS published in the 1960s. It is a classic 20th century autobiography and has been cherished by progressive people everywhere in the world. It ranks with the best: St. Augustine (the African Catholic saint), Frederick Douglass (great African American abolitionist), and Kwame Nrkumah (father of independent Africa). The autobiographical text, beginning with the innovative slave narratives, is the foundation of the Black literary tradition.

The Autobiography of Malcolm X is required reading to understand the contemporary Black American experience. This book covers life as lived by the masses of people, what Malcolm called "bottom of the pile Negroes." Here are the problems of family life, street life, drugs and violence, crime and prison. But we can also find religious transformation and moral discipline, consciousness and commitment, study and struggle.

Malcolm X dictated this book to Alex Haley who provided him with editorial support. He finished it shortly before he died, but it was published, as he predicted, after he was murdered.

Studying the *Autobiography*

1. Read this book in relation to its historical context from 1925 to 1965.
2. Keep in mind Malcolm X went through four stages and *The Autobiography* should be read in four parts as well
   - A. Malcolm Little (1925-1941): chapters 1-2
   - B. Detroit Red (1941-1952): chapters 3-10;
   - C. Malcolm X (1952-1964): chapters 11-15; and
   - D. Omowale El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (1964-1965): chapters 16-19.
3. Malcolm X was stopped. We face the challenge of going forward. Thus, this book must be read as a guide to action: use it to know yourself; use it to understand your historical context; use it to plan for the future.

Make Him Relevant

Finding Malcolm X's relevance to you means that you have to find out how you can identify with him:

- As a community leader?
- As a political leader who challenged and contributed to the movments that changed our society through the 60s?
- As an international leader?

Find Out What You Know

You probably know a lot more — about Malcolm X, about the conditions he grew up in, about what he meant to the Black community and to the wider American society — than you are aware of. You might also hold a lot of misinformation or myths about him and his context. Try to articulate and clarify what you know, what you think, what you believe by *mapping* your knowledge.

Before You Begin: In an open brainstorm session, write (on the board if you're in a class) all the words, phrases, names, dates, images etc. that you can come up with around your topic. Be prepared to notate information that might be biased or out and out wrong. Record *all* information and use it to direct further research, study, critical thinking.

When You're Ready to Go Deeper: Your brainstorm should have brought up questions that you could not answer, or might have revealed places of confusion. Use these points to identify research projects (these might be conducted by individuals or small groups if you're in a class). Your research might take you off in different directions once you get under way, but finding out what you do and don't know is a good way to start.

Before You Leave This Work: Reflect on what you've learned, how your opinions and ideas have changed: come back to the information you recorded before your research. What was accurate? What was inaccurate? What has changed? What kinds of stuff did people know about? didn't they know about? why?

Malcolm Little (1925-1941): The Exploited

Malcolm Little was an average youngster
who wanted a good life but was stopped by racism.

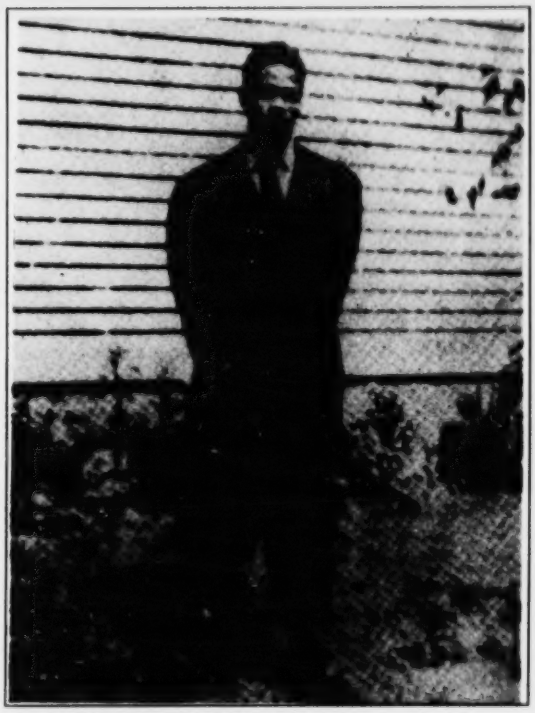
Chapters 1-2

One of the most difficult aspects of being Black and growing up in the USA is nurturing and grooming strong manhood. The pervading factor of Malcolm's youth was the systematic destruction of all legitimate means whereby he could have a strong source of identity, dignity, and emerging manhood. He had a strong father, Reverend Earl Little, who held some of the most militant political positions of his day as a Baptist minister and an organizer for the UNIA. Malcolm was the seventh child, a son, and his father's favorite. Reverend Little was harassed, threatened, and eventually driven with his family from their home. His "accidental" death in Lansing, Michigan continues to arouse suspicions.

The following years saw a once proud family being bludgeoned to the ground by the welfare system. This system didn't function to provide supportive assistance as much as it attacked the dignity of a family who had fallen on hard times through no fault of their own. As a result of several years of humiliation and deprivation, Malcolm's mother, Grenadian-born Louise Little, suffered a nervous breakdown and spent 26 years in a mental institution. Her breakdown happened when Malcolm was twelve.

Malcolm was sent to live in two foster homes, first with a black family and then with a white family in charge of a detention home. He was on his way to reform school. However, he was a bright and earnest youth, so he stayed with this white family for four years, finishing the eighth grade. But, even though Malcolm was a bright student, was elected president of his seventh grade class, and adapted to the racial code by staying away from white girls, he was put down. When he told his English teacher that he hoped to be a lawyer one day, he was rebuked with the admonition that he should be "realistic about being a **nigger**," and told that he should learn to work with his hands. Malcolm was fifteen. Societal racism destroyed Malcolm's father, his mother, and his aspiration to use education for self advancement. These attacks offered no hope for a legitimate life style. America required giving up dignity and manhood in exchange for either a life as a "mascot" or poverty, violence, and ignorance.

> ...IN THE SECOND SEMESTER of the seventh grade, I was elected class president. It surprised me even more than other people. But I can see now why the class might have done it. My grades were among the highest in the school. I was unique in my class, like a pink poodle. And I was proud; I'm not going to say I wasn't. In fact, by then, I didn't really have much feeling about being a Negro, because I was trying so hard, in every way I could, to be white....
>
> [Mr Ostrowski] told me, "Malcolm, you ought to be thinking about a career. Have you given it any thought?"
>
> ..."Well, yes, sir, I've been thinking I'd want to be a lawyer."...
>
> Mr Ostrowski looked surprised, I remember, and leaned back in his chair and clasped his hands behind his head. He kind of half-smiled and said, "Malcolm...we all like you here, you know that. But...a lawyer — that's no realistic goal for a nigger....Why don't you plan on carpentry?..."
>
> *Autobiography*, 34, 36



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Reading for Understanding

1. The family is the basic social organization of every society. Malcolm was born into a strong family, but it was destroyed. How did this happen? What role did racism play?
2. What was Marcus Garvey's philosophy? What experiences made Malcolm's father support Garvey?
3. How does the way that Malcolm talks about food reveal:
   - class and power differences between his mother and father?
   - differences between blacks and whites?
4. Did Malcolm like the Swerlins? Explain.
5. Malcolm's transition from Exploited to Exploiter was marked by Mr Ostrowski's career advice to him. What did it make Malcolm see?
6. Think about a teacher who really liked you or one who really didn't like you. Describe how they looked at you, what they saw, and what they expected of you.
7. How similar were the experiences of Malcolm Little to your own or to those of someone you know?

Using Context to Learn Vocabulary

Figure out the meaning of new words by using the context they appear in. You might find context clues in the same sentence, somewhere else in the paragraph or sometimes pages later. Figure out what the underlined words in the sentences below mean. The italicized words might give you clues.

1. My mother began going into town and *returning very upset*. The company that had issued the bigger *[insurance] policy* was balking at *paying off*.
2. If white boys were [stealing watermelons] it implied that they were only *acting like Negroes*. Whites have always *hidden or* justified all of the *guilts* they could by *ridiculing or blaming Negroes*.
3. My mother gradually became *less responsive* to us. And *less responsible*. The house became *less tidy*. We began to be more unkempt. And usually, now, *Hilda cooked*.
4. Mr Allen was *nicer* to me than most of the state Welfare people. He even had consoling *words* for the Gohannas' and Mrs. Adcock; *all of them were crying*.
5. The *girls* who seemed to like me, *I didn't go for* — and vice versa. I *couldn't dance* a lick anyway, and I couldn't see squandering my *few dimes* on girls.

Find at least three new words in each chapter from the *Autobiography*. Figure out what they mean from the context they are in. Once you think you know the meaning, check a dictionary.

Reading Real Life
Mapping Your Community

Malcolm Little naturally, but unsystematically, made observations about his surroundings which then supported the generalizations that formed the basis of his thinking. For example: he observed that there was one black family in the white city of Mason; this single black family was treated in a particular way; their treatment led Malcolm to believe particular things about white peoples' levels of tolerance and their behavior within and beyond those limits.

Making the most basic of observations — what kind of people you live with, what they do and how they think — can lay the foundation for a better understanding of your world and your place in it. Use the form below to gather information about your school, about your parents' workplace, about your neighborhood. Add your own questions as necessary.

About You

Age _____ Sex _____ Race _____

Place of Birth _____ Religion _____

What language(s) do you:

speak? _____ write? _____

_____ _____

Married Single Number of Children _____

What do you want to be as an adult? _____

Have you ever considered becoming a(n):

architect	____	mechanic	____
basketball player	____	minister	____
business owner	____	musician	____
doctor	____	politician	____
engineer	____	scientist	____
hair dresser	____	secretary	____
janitor	____	teacher	____
lawyer	____	other	____

About Your School

	ETHNICITY	NO.
Students	_____	____
	_____	____
	_____	____
Teachers	_____	____
	_____	____
	_____	____
Counselors	_____	____
	_____	____
Administrators	_____	____

About Your Neighborhood

What kinds of building are there on your block? (Eg. residential houses, apartment buildings, commercial, public, educational, abandoned.)

KINDS	NO
_____	____
_____	____
_____	____
_____	____
_____	____
_____	____

Who lives here? ETHNICITY NO.

_____ ____

_____ ____

_____ ____

How long have they lived here? ETHNICITY NO. OF YRS

_____ ____

_____ ____

_____ ____

What do they do for a living? ETHNICITY NO. OF YRS

_____ ____

_____ ____

_____ ____

Who works here? ETHNICITY NO. OF YRS

_____ ____

_____ ____

_____ ____

Who own the buildings? ETHNICITY NO. OF YRS

_____ ____

_____ ____

Where do people hang out? _____

One skill we use when we actively interpret what people mean is called **inferring**. We understand what they say, both in writing or in speaking, often by drawing meaning from not particular words but from what is implied by the words that are there. We *infer* meaning. Often, we can picture so clearly what the person is saying that we don't even realize that they might not be using the exact words that we understand. But just as often, we have to work to understand them. And sometimes we infer meanings from what they say that they themselves might not even realize they are communicating.

Reading for Inferences

When my mother was pregnant with me, she told me later, a party of hooded Ku Klux Klan riders galloped up to our home in Omaha, Nebraska, one night. Surrounding the house, brandishing their shotguns and rifles, they shouted for my father to come out. My mother went to the front door and opened it. Standing where they could see her pregnant condition, she told them that she was alone with her three small children, and that my father was away, preaching in Milwaukee. The Klansmen shouted threats and warnings at her that we had better get out of town because "the good Christian white people" were not going to stand for my father's "spreading trouble" among the "good" Negroes of Omaha with the "back to Africa" preachings of Marcus Garvey.

My father, the Reverend Earl Little, was a Baptist Minister...

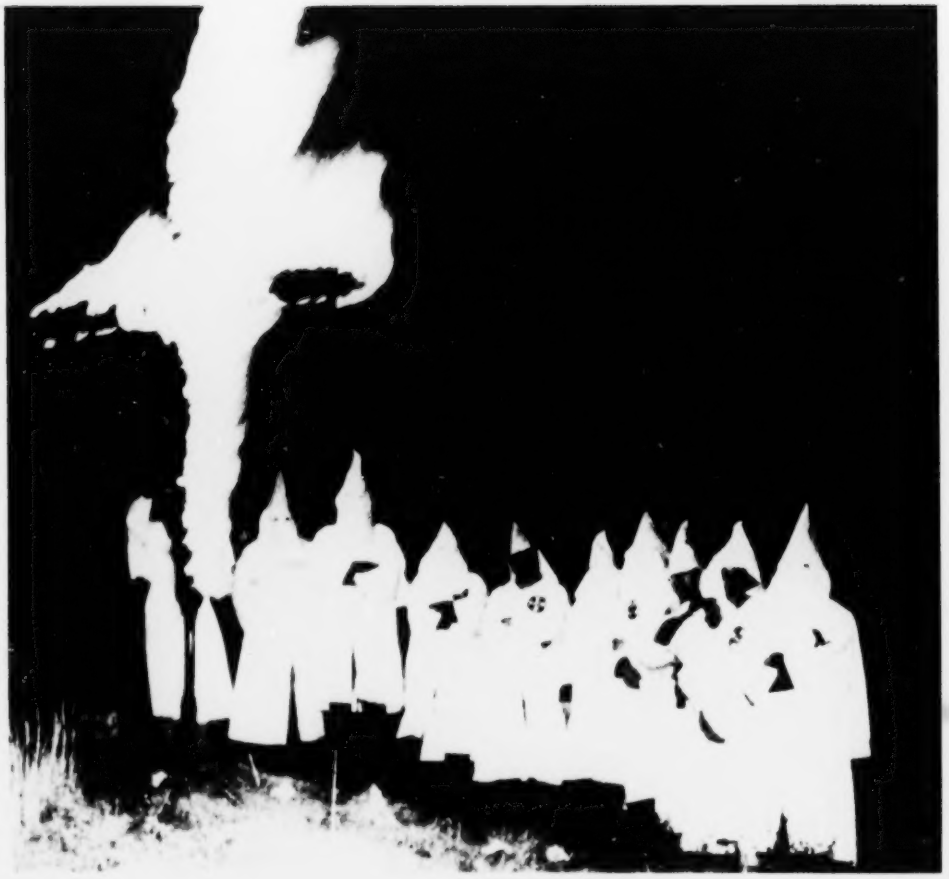
Autobiography 1

Look at the opening paragraph of Malcolm X's *Autobiography*. As all through this book, we can find places where we are required to make very transparent inferences, and some things that suggest more subtle and complex ones.

In this first paragraph, you probably pictured the Klansmen on horseback, even though Malcolm X never uses the word "horse." You can see the horses because the men are called "riders" and they "gallop" up to the house. From this, you *infer* that they are on horses, probably without even thinking about it.

A little later on, Malcolm suggests more subtly the theme of white hypocrisy that he will develop through his autobiography. He says his father is away preaching and later adds that Earl Little is a Baptist minister. In between, he describes the horsemen's threats to Malcolm's mother, which are appeals to "Christianity." Malcolm X states nothing explicitly about what this makes him believe about the white men's religion, about their behavior and about Black people who they would see as acceptable. But, by posing his preacher father next to hooded, rifle-brandishing Christians, Malcolm X encourages us to infer, among other things, that for these white men violence is a morally acceptable tactic and the only acceptable Black person is a submissive one.

What else do you infer from this scene?



What does the passage at the right tell you about what Reginald thought about him after he lost a boxing match with a white youth? Underline the words that lead you to your inference.

But the worst of my humiliations was my younger brother Reginald's attitude: he simply never mentioned the fight. It was the way he looked at me. So I went back to the gym, and I trained — hard.

Autobiography 24

In a 200 word essay, write about what you can infer from the second passage on the right. Identify all the words or phrases that lead you to make your inference.

I remember seeing the big, shiny photographs of Marcus Garvey that were passed from hand to hand....The pictures showed what seemed to me millions of Negroes thronged in parade behind Garvey riding in a fine car, a big black man dressed in a dazzling uniform with gold braid on it....and I remember how the meetings always closed with my father saying, several times, and the people chanting after him, "Up, you mighty race, you can accomplish what you will!"

...I remember one daytime meeting...no Negroes were allowed on the streets there after dark — hence the daytime meeting. In point of fact, in those days lots of Michigan towns...had a few "home" Negroes who lived there. Sometimes it would be just one family, as in... Mason...Mr Lyons had been a famous football star at Mason High School, was highly thought of in Mason, and consequently he now worked around that town in menial jobs.

Autobiography 6, 7

Find places in the *Autobiography* where Malcolm X forces you to infer meaning, as with the horses in the opening passage, and where inferring more complicated meaning makes sense of his earlier or later development.

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Detroit Red (1941-1952): The Exploiter

Detroit Red was a drug dealing criminal
who was a danger to himself and to the black community.

Chapters 3-10

Malcolm became Detroit Red when he accepted his rejection by racist whites, moved to the East Coast, and began to live his life based on the norms and values of the Street. Detroit Red was the opposite of Malcolm Little, but just as much a part of the American drama. Malcolm entered the illegal underground economy with his morality based solely on the pleasure principle; "if its good to you, its good for you," no matter who you hurt to get it, including yourself. This was a hedonistic phase, destructive and self destructive.

> I WAS A TRUE HUSTLER — uneducated, unskilled at anything honorable, and I considered myself nervy and cunning enough to live by my wits, exploiting any prey that presented itself. I would risk just about anything.
>
> Right now, in every big city ghetto, tens of thousands of yesterday's and today's school drop outs are keeping body and soul together by some form of hustling in the same way I did. And they inevitably move into more and more, worse and worse, illegality and immorality.
>
> *Autobiography* 109-110

Detroit Red refused to adapt to legitimate Black community norms, took to street life, and began worshipping everything evil as good. His life was filled with violence, crime, drugs, prostitution, and attacks on religion. All along the way, Malcolm says that his life was leading him to self-destruction and prison.

Detroit Red was a vulture that fed on his own people, a criminal element that made his own community weaker. This criminal element in the black community is responding to their negation by the racism they face in their daily life in the USA. Detroit Red could exist only when Malcolm Little had been destroyed. However, together they are the alternative offered by this system: Become a lawyer because white people think you are a harmless "mascot," or be a thug/hoodlum who provides white people with their secret hedonistic pleasures. The former is what most youths want and the latter is what all too many get.

Reading for Understanding

1. Where did Malcolm get his new name from? When and why? Do your friends call you by another name? How did you get it?
2. Who did Malcolm listen to and respect at this time of his life? Who were his friends?
3. What are the norms and values of:
   - the street?
   - the Boston Hill Black community?
   - a legitimate Black community?
4. What does Malcolm want from this kind of life? Does he get it? What is the price he pays?
5. Look for experiences that reflect how Detroit Red was different from Malcolm Little.
6. Why does Ella "begin treating Malcolm like a viper"?

Reading for Exploration

- What do you see as the options in *your* future? Do you see yourself trapped into Malcolm's two options?
- Can you think of anyone who talks like Malcolm X but behaves like Detroit Red? Can you think of anyone who speaks very "respectably" but behaves in ways that are destructive to their own or others' communities?
- Can people like Detroit Red make the same kind of changes Malcolm made today?
- Most of us know people who survive in an underground economy, sometimes through illegal means. Fast money means drugs and guns, including stealing and robbery. Then comes either the cemetery or prison. Why do people use drugs? Who profits? What can be done to stop drugs? In this context discuss Malcolm's description of the hustler.
- Find a rap song that encourages people to reject the path of Detroit Red for more constructive activities. What does it tell you to do? What does it give as reasons? Write your own rap song like this.

Reading Real Life

How do we identify racism? How do we combat it?

Racism in contemporary society can take all kinds of very subtle forms. These scenes are from a generation ago and many things have changed since then. Use them to help you identify the basic attitudes and behaviors of racism. Then write about an encounter you have had or witnessed where you can identify expressions of racism. Consider the results.

Articulate what is wrong in each of these pictures. How do different perspectives influence what might be considered courageous or concerned behaviors? Where is there a problem of information, and where is there a problem of values, or of differing interests.

Develop plans to change the minds of an individual in each of the scenes who you would consider racist.

1950 Washington DC — Dr. Charles Drew, a black physician, had invented the modern blood bank system of storing blood plasma, which was responsible for saving many lives during World War II. He had been made Director of the National Blood Bank Program, but was dismissed because he resisted the practice of separating the blood of white and black donors. Dr. Drew dies because he is unable to gain access to a hospital for the blood he needs. The hospital bars his entry because he is black.

August 28, 1955 Mississippi — Emmett Till, a 14 year old black boy, had allegedly whistled at a white woman and had been killed by two white men for it. At the trial for murder, the white men's defense attorney tells the jurors that he is "sure that every last Anglo-Saxon one of you has the courage to free these men in the face of that pressure," referring to nationwide protest demonstrations that had organized around the case. The jurors, must have had the courage: they acquitted the two white killers.

September 1962 Oxford, Mississippi — Governor Ross Barnett, defying a federal court order, had prevented James Meredith from entering the University of Mississippi because he was black. When 300 federal marshals try to escort Mr Meredith to school, they are attacked by white mobs. Hundreds of people are wounded and two killed. Kennedy is forced to send 30,000 army troops to maintain peace. Mr Meredith succeeds in attending classes.

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Creating Communities

Recognizing Power

What is power? How is it gained and held? Who has it? How is it passed on or how does it change hands?

Create a community paying attention to what kinds of material, social and spiritual resources your community will need. Build the institutions you need to create, provide and distribute what you need.

1. **Form groups** of 4 to 6 people.
2. **Imagine a community** that really works: everyones' needs are taken care of equally and fairly.
3. **Draw a map** of your community on a big sheet of newsprint.
4. **Describe your community** in terms of ethnicity, language, gender, and age, and any other characteristics you think are important. Do different groups live in different neighborhoods?
5. **Describe your community's needs**, noting differences between the groups: for example, health services might be different for an old man than for a 30 year old woman.
6. **Name all of the institutions** that you will need to take care of the community. Put them on your map. Pay attention to where you locate them: close to the community they serve? close to the homes of the people who work there? For each community, decide:
   - Who is served?
   - Where does the money come from?
   - Who decides how to spend the money?
   - Who actually carries out the spending of the money?
   - What are the formal policies? Who sets them?
   - What are the informal policies? Who sets them?
7. Now **imagine** all the factors that might **prevent a community from working**? Remember that institutions are made of individual people who might have all kinds of fears or weaknesses or interests of their own that they might feel are more pressing than the needs of the people who their institution should be serving.
8. **Role play some scenes** from this community in different ways: first how you think people should behave, and then how people might behave if there are problems. Define the characteristics of each person and consider how those characteristics might come to play. Change the people, from men to women, from white to black to hispanic, from a 30 year old to an 18 year old to a 62 year old; how might it change peoples' actions.
   - A teenage mother is at a bank trying to open a credit account.
   - A father meets with teachers and a counselor at school about his troublesome son.
   - A husband and wife are trying to get a loan to open a business in a poor neighborhood.
   - A woman buying essential groceries finds herself a little short of cash.

Minister Malcolm X (1952-1964): The Self Emancipator

Malcolm X was a Black nationalist
Muslim minister who exposed the racist barbarism of American life.

Chapters 11-15

> MY HOME EDUCATION gave me, with every additional book that I read, a little more sensitivity to the deafness, dumbness and blindness that was afflicting the Black race in America. ...You will never catch me with a free 15 minutes in which I'm not studying something I feel might be able to help the Black man.
>
> *Autobiography* 178

Detroit Red was such a "bad dude" in prison, and so hard on things like religion that his fellow prisoners started calling him "satan." But Malcolm had more sense than to choose to be a devil in a hell based on his own exploitation. For most prisoners who have some self respect and dignity left, there are only two interests: survival and getting out. But Malcolm discovered that his life as Detroit Red failed to arm him with even the most rudimentary skills needed to rise above his imprisonment. He really couldn't read and write very well.

Malcolm found two clear sources of strength. Both were strong father figures, both buttressing the wounded but not slain manhood of this giant who had been stooping in the dung heap of criminality. Malcolm began to stand tall in prison. He found Bimbi, one of the famous "jail house intellectuals," who spoke the truth and was respected by everyone. He also was turned toward the Nation of Islam by his family and accepted the teaching of Elijah Muhammad. Bimbi gave Malcolm a new model of status and respect, based on being intelligent. Mr Muhammad gave Malcolm the desire to better himself, to get out of prison, and to help others. Malcolm was able to get a firm grasp of a new morality, organized politics, and a new Black ideology. All of this was a unique and mixed bag, later revealed to possess strengths and weaknesses.

Malcolm X was the model of the self emancipator. This is his most vital lesson. There are three aspects of this self emancipation:

1. **Malcolm knew how to learn**, because he listened to others and learned to do a great deal of reading. In many ways genius means being able to learn from other people.
2. **Malcolm had commitment**, because he was judicious in using his time and money to serve his ideals including his politics, his family, his religion, and, above all, his search for truth.
3. **Malcolm was the model of discipline**, because he imposed order where there was chaos, because he stood cool like Daniel "in the lion's den," and he was consistent.

When Malcolm joined the Nation of Islam, he was returning to the nationalist tradition of his father, but he adopted a new religion which uniquely popularized the historical necessity of uniting with the world experience of Black people. Malcolm stood outside the norms of society like Detroit Red, but this time not as the under-belly of America, but as a challenge to it. Malcolm stood outside of it while in it, stared it in the eye, and used his intelligence to pull the covers off America to show its rape of the world, to show it as barbarism veiled in silk and satin.

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Minister Malcolm

Elijah Muhammad spoke of how in this wilderness of North America, for centuries the "blue-eyed devil white man" had brainwashed the "so-called Negro." He told us how, as one result, the Black man in America was "mentally, morally, and spiritually dead." Elijah Muhammad spoke of how the Black man was the Original Man, who had been kidnapped from his homeland and stripped of his language, his culture, his family structure, his family name, until the Black man in America did not even realize who he was. He told us, and showed us, how his teachings of the true knowledge of ourselves would lift up the Black man from the bottom of the white man's society and place the Black man back where he had begun, at the top of civilization.

Autobiography, 199

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us that as it was the evil sin of slavery that caused the downfall and destruction of ancient Egypt and Babylon, and of ancient Greece, as well as ancient Rome, so it was the evil sin of colonialism (slavery, nineteenth-century European style) that caused the collapse of the white nations in present-day Europe as world powers. Unbiased scholars and unbiased observers agree that the wealth and power of white Europe has rapidly declined during the nineteen-year period between World War II and today. So we of this present generation are also witnessing how the enslavement of millions of Black people in this country is now bringing White America to her hour of judgement, to her downfall as a respected nation. And even those Americans who are blinded by childlike patriotism can see that it is only a matter of time before White America too will be utterly destroyed by her own sins, and all traces of her former glory will be removed from this planet forever.

Autobiography, 121-22

...Our children grow up in this overcrowded atmosphere, the lack of much-needed privacy destroys their sense of shame. It lowers their moral standards and leaves them exposed to every form of indecency and vice imaginable. Our young girls, our daughters, our baby sisters become unwed mothers before they are hardly out of their teens. Our community has thousands of unmarried mothers, mothers who have no hope of ever getting a husband. And our community has tens of thousands of little babies who have no father to act as their provider or protector. In

One of the greatest strengths of the radical Black tradition is its opposition to Eurocentrism. The Eurocentric viewpoint holds that Greece and Rome were culturally superior and laid the foundation for the eternal white European dominance of the world. Elijah Muhammad continued the radical Black tradition of exposing this lie and in its place articulated an Afrocentric philosophy of history that links the fall of countries to the extent that their wealth was based on exploitation, "the sin of slavery." Malcolm X stressed this point to liberate our consciousness to consider a post-American history of the world.

In his early days as a Black Muslim Minister, Malcolm spread the idea that White people were devils and that the white race was the product of the scheming of a mad Black scientist, Dr. Yacub (see page 25). Malcolm observed in his autobiography (p. 224) that many of the early converts to the Nation of Islam were from the very well educated professional strata, nurses, civil servants, accountants, etc. Why do you think that this doctrine would have appealed to this strata of black society.

How and why does Malcolm explain the rise and fall of countries? What "sins" are being committed against Black people in the USA? Why will the US fall?

Malcolm X delivers a scathing indictment of the economics of the black community. Do you think any parts of his analysis of the economics of the black community are still true today? In what ways have things changed?

As a Muslim minister, Malcolm felt that the ultimate solution for blacks was to return to their African homeland. How did Marcus Garvey's plan differ from the plan Black Muslims? Can you name other prominent African American leaders, who espoused a similar program?

fact the only provider many of our children know is the white welfare agent or the white social worker. Many of our children actually mistake the welfare agent or the white social worker for their father. And oftentimes this is true.

...Our people in the Negro community are trapped in a vicious cycle of ignorance, poverty, disease, sickness, and death. There seems to be no way out. No way of escape. The wealthy, educated Black bourgeoisie, those uppity Negroes who do escape, never reach back and pull the rest of our people out with them. The Black masses remain trapped in the slums.

October 11, 1963

Religion and nationalism are major aspects of our radical Black tradition. What role did each play in the transformation of Malcolm X? Discuss each of the points Malcolm makes in relation to the teaching of Elijah

We have this in common: We have a common oppressor, a common exploiter, and a common discriminator. But once we all realize that we have a common enemy, then we unite — on the basis of what we have in common. And what we have foremost in common is that enemy — the white man. He's an enemy to all of us. I know some of you all think that some of them aren't enemies. Time will tell.

November 1963

Reading for Understanding

1. What motivated Malcolm X to begin his program of self-education? Describe his system step by step. How important was the prison library?
2. Why did he envy Bimbi? What personal characteristics or attitudes is Bimbi's model of behavior based on?
3. What does Malcolm X mean when he says his English wasn't even functional?
4. What two skills did he recognize that his work with the dictionary built in him?
5. What changes did he notice in himself as he progressed?
6. How did he continue reading after "lights out" every night?
7. What jobs did Malcolm work at during his first years with the Nation of Islam?
8. Read the entire story of Yacub from Minister Malcolm's speeches. How does it make you feel about whites? about blacks?

When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not to stand here or go yonder. He will find his "proper place" and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without being told. In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit.

Carter G Woodson

Looking at Language

Malcolm realized that accepting another person's interpretation could quickly have him accepting — and even constructing — his own slavery. That's why all through his life he studied so hard. He always drew his own interpretations. Many people point to his sharp analyses as one thing that made him so powerful.

The passage at the right demonstrates Malcolm X's acute power of interpretation. It comes from "Black Man's History," a speech he gave in December, 1962, as one of his regular talks at Temple Number 7.

In the history of the Black man, which began 66 trillion years ago, Yacub, a wise Black scientist was born 25,000 years ago. Yacub, who would develop the white race, was preaching among the 30% of the population that was dissatisfied, and creating confusion in the land. The king threw him in jail and then negotiated a compromise with him.

> In the Bible, it says Jacob wrestled with the angel. Jacob was Yacub, and the angel that he wrestled wasn't God, it was the government of that day. "Angel" only means "a power" or somebody with power. When a man loses his power or position, you say he has his wings clipped. So when it says Jacob wrestled with an angel, the angel is used only as a symbol of the government of the day.

Yacub agreed to be exiled to an island as long as he could take 59,999 of his followers along with him plus everything he needed to bring into existence a new civilization.

> When you get to the place in the Bible where it says, "And God said, 'Let us make man'" that was Yacub too, not the Supreme Being. It wasn't the Supreme Being who made the sun. When He speaks he says "Let there be light." He said He was supreme. He was independent, He needed no help, no associates.

But when it came to making a man, that god said, "Let *us* make man." He was a lesser god, who needed he 59,999 followers to do such a thing. He didn't speak with independence, because he couldn't. He was not God.

Questions for Thought

1. Every culture has **myths**. What is a myth? Why are they so important?
2. Choose a popular myth that you have studied in school. What kind of character or behaviors does it show as good? as bad? Does it distinguish between someone of that society and an outsider? How? Apply these same considerations to a popular Bible story and to the story of Yacub.
3. Draw pictures or make a collage representing a myth that you grew up with. Think about why you make the people in it look the way they do.

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El Hajj Malik El Shabazz: The Social Liberator (1964-1965)

El Hajj Malik El Shabazz was an anti-imperialist, pan-africanist who expanded his religion and nationalism toward world brotherhood.

Chapters 16-19

> IT WAS A BIG ORDER — the organization that I was creating in my mind, one which would help to challenge the American Black man to gain his human rights, and to cure his mental, spiritual, economic, and political sicknesses ...Substantially, [it] would differ from the Nation of Islam in that it would embrace all faiths of Black men, and it would carry into practice what the Nation of Islam had only preached ....the true brotherhood I had seen in the Holy World had influenced me to recognize that anger can blind human vision.
>
> *Autobiography*, 320, 381

he Nation of Islam helped Malcolm lift himself up and become one of the greatest Black leaders of all time. But, while remaining rooted in much of what he learned there, Malcolm grew beyond this organization. This was a time of great struggle in the Civil Rights movement that had swept the nation and focused the attention of the world on places like Birmingham, Alabama where blacks were attacked with dogs and firehoses and remained undeterred in their quest for equality in America. This was a time of great personal trauma and profound growth for Malcolm. His public comments in the wake of the Kennedy assassination were a pretext to "silence" him, which led to his eventual separation from the Nation of Islam. As an independent black leader, Malcolm moved to the center stage of history as he refined his ideas of black nationalism. His new organization was the Organization of Afro-American Unity.

Malcolm became a recognized world leader of the Afro-American people and was accepted in diplomatic circles from the United Nations to virtually all of Africa. Malcolm emphasized three things: independence in consciousness and political action; self-defense in the face of racist violence; and turning our struggle from one about civil rights to one about human rights. Malcolm went to Mecca and became a minister of the official Sunni Muslims who are organized on a worldwide basis. Further, after Mecca he held that religion was a private/personal matter.

Malcolm rose from the lowest depths to the highest achievements possible, world-wide recognition and respect for faith, honesty, vision, and courage. The path he traveled to get out of hell is a road open to most Black youth. Malcolm is a role model for the great masses of Black youth. He is their sunshine.

Malcolm X

I believe that there will ultimately be a clash between the oppressed and those that do the oppressing. I believe that there will be a clash between those who want freedom, justice and equality for everyone and those who want to continue the systems of exploitation....It is incorrect to classify the revolt of the Negro as simply a racial conflict of Black against White, or as a purely American problem. Rather we are today seeing a global rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressor, the exploited against the exploiter.

January 1965

...Our problem has to be internationalized. Now the African nations are speaking out and linking the problem of racism in Mississippi with the problem of racism in the Congo, and also the problem of racism in South Vietnam. It's all racism. It's all part of the vicious racist system that the Western powers have used to continue to degrade and exploit and oppress the people in Africa and Asia and Latin America during recent centuries.

And when these people in these different areas begin to see that the problem is the same problem, and when the 22 million black Americans see that our problem is the same as the problem of the people who are being oppressed in South Vietnam and the Congo and Latin America, then — the oppressed people of this earth make up a majority — then we approach our problem as a majority that can *demand*, not as a minority that has to beg.

January 28, 1965

Whites who are sincere should organize themselves and figure out some strategies to break down the prejudice that exists in white communities. This is where they can function more intelligently and effectively, in the white community itself, and this has never been done.

1964

How can we get political power? We have to organize the people of Harlem in a door-by-door campaign, I mean door by door, house by house, people by people, person by person, and you have to make them feel so ashamed that they're not registered they won't even come our of the house. We have to create an atmosphere in Harlem — and when I say Harlem, the greater New York area — in which every Black man will feel like he's a traitor if he's not a registered voter. His ballot will be like a bullet

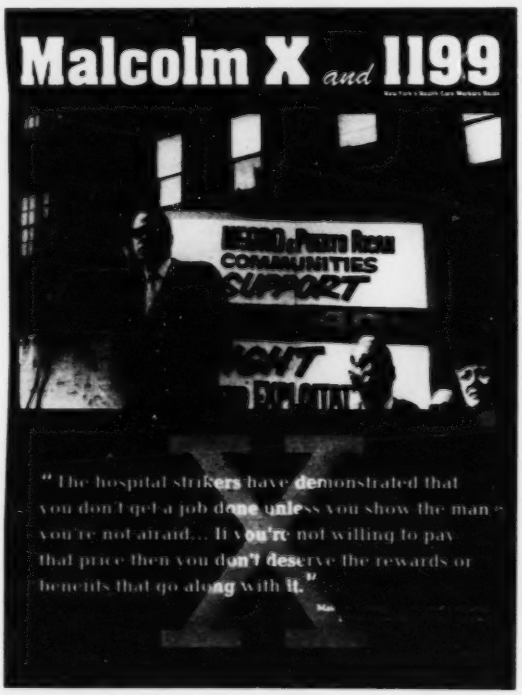
1965

Compare the quotes on this page to the first quote on page 23.

How did Malcolm see the relationship between the Black Freedom struggle in this country and the anti-colonial movements in Africa?

One of the greatest points of controversy about Malcolm X is the extent to which his life changed in his last two or three years. Discuss the changes that took place in Malcolm's point of view.

What changes did Malcolm X's trips to the Middle East have on his thinking? How did the Vietnam War influence his thinking?


Malcolm X and 1199
COMMUNITIES
SUPPORT
"The hospital strikers have demonstrated that you don't get a job done unless you show the man you're not afraid... If you're not willing to pay that price then you don't deserve the rewards or benefits that go along with it."

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Malcolm says that one of the main problems of blacks is that they didn't like their appearance? Do you agree or disagree? Have you seen a change in your lifetime?

Do you think there has been a return to a skin-color-based system of stratification among Blacks?

Malcolm makes a compelling argument about the positive role that the historical knowledge of a people's accomplishments can have. Have the things that you have learned about black history played a role in changing your attitude about yourself?

African-American history can be understood in economic, political, and/or cultural terms. We have always had to fight for progress in all of these areas. Discuss the best examples of struggle in each area.

How did Malcolm X clarify the role of religion in social movements? What was the basis for Bback liberation theology that Malcolm laid? How did he put the race/class struggle of blacks in the USA in a universal world context of the oppressed fighting their oppressors?

What were the two organizations that Malcolm X created? What were their purposes?

Europeans created and popularized the image of Africa as a jungle, a wild place where people were cannibals, naked and savage in a countryside overrun with dangerous animals. Such an image of the Africans was so hateful to Afro-Americans that they refused to identify with Africa. We did not realize that in hating Africa and the Africans we were hating ourselves. You cannot hate the roots of a tree and not hate the tree itself. Negroes certainly cannot at the same time hate Africa and love themselves. We Negroes hated the African features: the African nose, the shape of our lips, the color of our skin, the texture of our hair. We could only end up hating ourselves. Our skin became a trap, a prison; we felt inferior, inadequate, helpless. It was not an image created by Africans or by Afro-Americans, but by an enemy.

December 31, 1964

...When you go back into the past and find out where you once were, then you will know that you weren't always at this level, that you once had attained a higher level, had made great achievements, contributions to society, civilization, science, and so forth. And you know that if you once did it, you can do it again; you automatically get the incentive, the inspiration and the energy necessary to duplicate what our forefathers formerly did. But by keeping us completely cut off from our past, it is easy for the man who has power over us to make us willing to stay at this level because we feel that we were always at this level, a low level. That's why I say it is so important for you and me to spend time today learning something about the past so that we can better understand the present, analyze it, and then do something about it.

January 24, 1965

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Malcolm X & Martin Luther King

Both Malcolm X and Dr. King were men whose evolutions led them to rethink their opinions of each other.

You don't have to criticize Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. His actions criticize him...

Any Negro who teaches other Negroes to turn the other cheek in the face of attack is disarming that Negro of his God-given right, of his moral right, of his natural right, of his intelligent right to defend himself. Everything in nature can defend itself, and is right in defending itself, except the American Negro. And men like King...he doesn't tell them, "Don't fight each other." "Don't fight the white man" is what he's saying in essence, because the followers of Martin Luther King, Jr. will cut each other from head to foot, but they will not do anything to defend themselves against the attacks of the white man...

White people follow King, White people pay King. White people subsidize King. White people support King. But the masses of black people don't support Martin Luther King, Jr. King is the best weapon that the white man, who wants to brutalize Negroes, has ever gotten in this country, because he is setting up a situation where, when the white man wants to attack Negroes, they can't defend themselves.

June 1963

Dr King wants the same thing I want — freedom. Now his method of going about getting it is the nonviolent way. We may differ in method, but that does not mean we differ in objective.

April 1964

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Martin Luther King, Jr
A Time to Break the Silence

A few years ago...it seemed as if there was a real promise of hope for the poor — both black and white — through the Poverty Program. There were experiments, hopes, new beginnings. Then came the build up in Vietnam and I watched the program broken and eviscerated as if it were some idle political plaything of a society gone mad on war, and I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as adventures like Vietnam continue....

[And] it became clear to me that the war was doing far more than devastating the hopes of the poor at home. It was sending their sons and their brothers and their husbands to fight and to die in extraordinarily high proportions relative to the rest of the population. We were taking the black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them 8,000 miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in Southwest Georgia. So we have been repeatedly faced with the cruel irony of watching negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools. So we watch them in brutal solidarity burning the huts of a poor village, but we realize that they would never live on the same block in Detroit. I could not be silent in the face of such cruel manipulation of the poor.

My third reason moves to an even deeper level of awareness, for it grows out of my experience in the ghettos of the north over the last three years — especially the last three summers. As I have walked among the desperate, rejected and angry young men I have told them that Molotov cocktails and rifles would not solve their problems. I have tried to offer them my deepest compassion while maintaining my conviction that social change comes most meaningfully through nonviolent action. But they asked — and rightly so — what about Vietnam? They asked if their own nation wasn't using massive doses of violence to solve its problems, to bring about the changes it wanted. Their questions hit home, and I knew that I could never again raise my voice against violence of the oppressed in ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today — my own government. ....

In 1957 a sensitive American official overseas said that it seemed to him that our nation was on the wrong side of a world revolution. During the past 10 years we have seen emerge a pattern of suppression which now has justified the presence of US military "advisors" in Venezuela [and] the counter-revolutionary action of American forces in Guatemala...Columbia...Peru. It is with such activity in mind that the words of the late John F Kennedy come back to haunt us. Five years ago he said, "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable."

April 1967

Using Comparisons to Build Understanding

Read the last paragraph of page 418 in the *Autobiography*. It makes reference to a *New York Times* article on the future of the Civil Rights movement. Do you agree with the article's assessment of the Movement? What do you think of their predictions for the future of the Civil Rights movement?

In the epilogue of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Alex Haley sent Malcolm a clipping of an article of a conference of Negro leaders which predicted an expanding role for Malcolm X in the years to come, and a union between Malcolm X and Martin Luther King of the basis of Malcolm's ideas. Do you think such an alliance could have happened? What would have been its impact.

In "Message to the Grassroots" Malcolm X says that you can't understand what's happening in Mississippi if you don't understand what's happening in the Congo. Compare this to Dr. King's statement in the second paragraph.

Find King's opinions of Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam.

Looking at Language

In his phrase "airtight cage," Martin Luther King expresses a **paradox**, a statement that seems to be self-contradictory, yet represents a deeper truth. Why is this an apparent contradiction? What deeper truth does it express? Look for a comparison in Malcolm X's life. Malcolm X uses a similar image but in reverse in his *Autobiography*. Can you find it?

Martin Luther King gives personal images of the causes of his impatience in a series of nine subordinate clauses. Decide for each "when" clause whether the condition described still exists. Decide for each of those conditions whether they existed for Malcolm X in Nebraska, in New York as a hustler, and as a national and international organizer. Construct a sentence like King's replacing King's experiences with experiences from the *Autobiography*. Construct another sentence with nine experiences from your own life that make you feel impatient or resentful or angry.

From *Letters from the Birmingham Jail*

We have united for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God-given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jetlike speed toward gaining political independence, but we still creep at a horse-and-buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say "wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that function is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her unconscious bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five-year-old son who is asking: "Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?"; when you take a cross-country drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" and "colored"; when your first name becomes "nigger," your middle name becomes "boy (however old you are)," and your last name becomes "John," and your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs," when you are constantly at tip-toe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodiness" — then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into an abyss of despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience.

Martin Luther King, April 16, 1963

Malcolm on Women's Roles

Women have always played essential roles in social movements and occupied a central position in society, and Malcolm X grew to appreciate that.

> WHERE THE WOMEN ARE ENCOURAGED to get education and play a more active role in the all-around affairs of the community and the country, the entire people are more active, more enlightened, and more progressive. Thus, in my opinion, the Muslim religious leaders of today must reevaluate and spell out with clarity the Muslim position on education in general and education for women in particular. And then a vast program must be launched to elevate the standard of education in the Muslim world. And old African proverb states, "Educate a man and you educate an individual; educate a woman and you educate an entire family."
>
> 1965

The particular problems and concerns of Black women must be discussed not as an isolated question, but as a part of the problems faced by all Black people. Over 52% of all Black people in the US are women. Women play a special role in bearing children and in the family, and increasingly are becoming sole heads of households. However, Black women face greater discrimination than any other group in this society —in income, in job opportunities, in education, in holding political office, and in other areas of social life.

The oppression of Black women has its historical roots in the foundation and development of capitalism in the United States. This special oppression is based on three things:

1. Most Black women are workers and are subjected to economic exploitation at the hands of the rich. Black women have always worked and this more than anything else has shaped their experience in the US. This work experience, in turn, makes their concerns somewhat different from those of the women's liberation movement, which sought largely to get white women into the workplace. Both Black and White women, however, *do* share the demand of equal pay for equal work.

2. Black women, as do the masses of Black people, suffer from many forms of racist oppression, like job discrimination and the denial of basic democratic rights because of racism.

3. Black women, like all women, face male su-premacy (sexism), which attempts to put women into subordinate roles in a male dominated society. The oppression of Black women grows out of the same system of capitalist oppression that exploits and oppresses the masses of people and everybody else in this society.

The particular forms of this oppression have changed as the experiences of Black people have changed from slavery to the post-civil war rural experiences to the urban industrial experiences to post industrialism.

During the 60s Malcolm X and the male leadership of the Black Freedom Movement had very little to say about the role of black women and gender oppression. Malcolm and King spoke out eloquently about racial oppression and exploitation of black people here in the US and around the globe. He, like King and most of the other male leaders of the movement, took his cues from the dominant ideology of the time. However, towards the end of his life, Malcolm showed a growing appreciation for the role of black women in the freedom struggle.

Malcolm X

Many of the black [women] in those wartime days were right in step with the white ones in having husbands fighting overseas while they were laying up with other men, even giving them their husbands' money. And many women just faked as mothers and wives while playing the field as hard as prostitutes — with their husbands and children right there in New York....All women by their nature, are fragile and weak: they are attracted to the male in whom they see strength....while a man must at all times respect his woman, at the same time he needs to understand that he must control her if he expects to get her respect.

Autobiography, 91, 93, 226

How is Malcolm X's view from the *Autobiography* different from the later one?

What roles does Malcolm X see men playing in society? Women? Do you agree?

One thing I noticed in both the Middle East and Africa, in every country that was progressive, the women were progressive. In every country that was undeveloped and backward, it was to the same degree that the women were undeveloped, or underdeveloped, and backward....[The] type of societies where they put the woman in a closet and discourage her from getting a sufficient education and don't give her the incentive by allowing her maximum participation in whatever area of the society where she's qualified, they kill her incentive. And killing her incentive, she kills the incentive in her children. And the man himself has no competition so he doesn't develop to his fullest potential.

1965

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Ebony Wants a Role in Social Decision Making

Ebony is a mother of three children and married to Sam, a bank officer. She has just graduated from a community college and plans to run for political office. Ebony wants to fight for legislation for more low-income housing for the poor, especially for single Black mothers, and her campaign is supported by a multiracial grassroots group of men and women. Sam is upset! He says that she should get a nice job teaching and concentrate on getting their brownstone refurbished and a second car for the family. Sam declares that he will get a second job, their family does not need the problems of the community, Ebony already has him as her "big prize" to satisfy her, and he's not gong to be stuck home in the evening with the kids while she's a meetings. When Ebony tells Sam that she is creating a new human identity for herself and her children, Sam asserts that "feminism is a white middle class movement!" Ebony responds by firmly telling him that men must hold up their "half of the sky" and that "today, we are in the process of redefining what is womanhood and what is manhood in the framework of a new, enlarged concept of humanhood."

Adapted from André McLaughlin, Medgar Evers College

Reading Real Life

In an essay, explain this "new, enlarged concept of humanhood." Talk about how Sam's remarks reflect male chauvinistic attitudes.

Do men put stresses and strains upon themselves in trying to be what they consider masculine?

Is women's liberation for all women, regardless of color?

Where does the phrase, to "hold up half of the sky" come from? What does it mean? What does Ebony use it to

Questions for Thought

"We have learned from the feminist movement that men as well as women are adversely effected by oppressive sex roles. Similarly, Whites too suffer from racism."

Do men suffer from sexism? How? Do whites suffer from racism? How? How are racism and sexism similar? How are they different?

What is the triple oppression of black women. Illustrate this concept by using historical data.

Name and describe three examples of oppression that might have existed in the plantation system that would not exist in an industrial urban setting.

Name and describe three examples of oppression that did not exist within the plantation system; within the post-civil war rural setting.

Rap music has drawn a lot of heat from women who've protested its macho attitudes and its one dimensional portrayals of women. Women have also written their own music that responds to these male attitudes. Find a songs that illustrate both positions. Find a rap song by a man that doesn't reduce women like this.

Malcolm on Education

The fight for progress and a better life is clarified through action and debate. Education must give us the tools for both.

Our children are being criminally shortchanged in the public school system of America. The Afro-American schools are the poorest run schools in New York City. Principals and teachers fail to understand the nature of the problems with which they work and as a result they cannot do the job of teaching our children. The textbooks teach our children nothing about the great contributions of Afro-Americans to the growth and development of this country. The Board of Education's integration program is expensive and unworkable; and the organization of principals and supervisors in the New York City school system has refused to support the Board's plan to integrate the schools, thus dooming it to failure.

> EDUCATION IS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT in the struggle for human rights. It is the means to help our children and people rediscover their identity and thereby increase self-respect. Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today.

The Board of Education has said that even with its plan there are ten per cent of the schools in the Harlem-Bedford-Stuyvesant community they cannot improve. This means that the Organization of Afro-American Unity must make the Afro-American community a more potent force for educational self-improvement.

A first step in the program to end the existing system of racist education is to demand that the ten per cent of the schools the Board of Education will not include in its plan be turned over to and run by the Afro-American community. We want Afro-American principals to head these schools. We want Afro-American teachers in these schools. We want textbooks written by Afro-Americans that are acceptable to us to be used in these schools.

The Organization of Afro-American Unity will select and recommend people to serve on local school boards where school policy is made and passed on to the Board of Education.

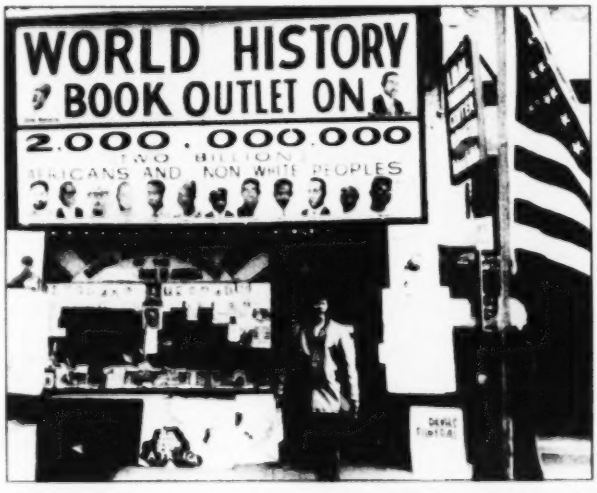
Through these steps we will make the ten per cent of schools we take over educational showplaces that will attract the attention of people all over the nation.

If these proposals are not met, we will ask Afro-American parents to keep their children out of the present inferior schools they attend. When these schools in our neighborhood are controlled by Afro-Americans, we will return to them.

The Organization of Afro-American Unity recognizes the tremendous importance of the complete involvement of Afro-American parents in every phase of school life. Afro-American parents must be willing and able to go into the schools and see that the job of educating our children is done properly.

We call on all Afro-Americans around the nation to be aware that the conditions that exist in the New York City public school system are as deplorable in their cities as they are here. We must unite our effort and spread our program of self-improvement through education to every Afro-American community in America.

We must establish all over the country schools of our own to train our children to become scientists and mathematicians. We must realize the need for adult education and for job retraining programs that will emphasize a changing society in which automation plays the key role. We intend to use the tools of education to help raise our people to an unprecedented level of excellence and self-respect through their own efforts.



Malcolm X

The [Brown vs. Board of Education] Supreme Court decision has never been enforced. The promised have never been fulfulled. We have received only tokens, substitutes, trickery and deceit.

May 1963

We are issuing a call for students across the country, from coast to coast, to launch a new study of the problem [of race and racism] — not a study that is any way guided or influenced by adults, but a study of their onw. Thus we can get a new analysis of the problem, a more realistic analysis. After this new study and more realistic analysis, we are going to ask those same students (by students I mean young people, who have less of a stake to lose, are more flexible and can be more objective) for a new approach to the problem.

March 1964

How is education an important element in the struggle for human rights?

Do you think conditions have changed since the OAAU charter was written?

Has Malcolm's call for student research and analysis been answered? Is it being answered in your school? Are you ready to answer the call?

- Is your school well funded? (do you have books for everyone? Do you have access to computers? to science and art equipment? Is there space inside and outside your classrooms for a variety of activities and groups work?
- Do your textbooks teach about the great contributions to history of all kinds of people?
- What is the ethnic composition of your school's: 1) student body; 2) teaching staff; 3) couseling staff; 4) administrative staff?
- Are parents involved in the school? How?

Supreme Court Decision: Brown vs. Board of Education

...In approaching this problem we cannot turn the clock back to 1868 when the (Fourteenth) Amendment was adopted, or even to 1896 when Plessy vs. Ferguson was written. We must consider public education in the light of its full development and its present place in American life throughout the nation. Only in this way can it be determined if segregation in public school deprives these plaintiffs of the equal protection of the laws.

[Other court decisions] relied in large part on "those qualities which are incapable of objective measurement but which make for greatness...[such as the negro's] ability to study to engage in discussions and exchange views with other students, and, in general, to learn his profession. Such considerations apply with added force to children in grade and high schools. To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone....The impact is greater when it has the sanction of law.... A sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a child to learn. Segregation with the sanction of law, therefore, has a tendency to retard the educational and mental development of Negro children....

Chief Justice Warren, 1954

Looking at Historical Documents

What arguments does Chief Justice Warren offer for the importance of public schooling?

What is the primary flaw that the Chief Justice finds in segregated schooling?

What have been the long range results for the United States of this decision?

Why did people feel that the decision was a drastic step?

Find the text of the decision in the case of Plessy vs. Ferguson. Compare the two decisions and answer the following:

a. Could the Supreme Court decision in Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas have been written in the 1890s? Why or why not?

b. What were the consequences of the "separate but equal" doctrine?

c. What do you think the consequences of the continuation of "separate but equal" would have been after 1954?

d. What were the consequences of the Brown vs Board of Education decision?

Decade of Protest

Malcolm X was at the center of a momentous social transformation.

...1965 WILL PROBABLY BE the *longest, hottest, bloodiest* summer that has yet been seen in the United States since the beginning of the Black Revolution, primarily because the same causes that existed in the winter of 1964 still exist in January, in February, of 1965: inferior housing, inferior employment, inferior education. All of the evils of a bankrupt system still exist where black Americans are concerned...and, as I said, it will be the *longest, hottest, bloodiest summer of the entire Black Revolution.*

Malcolm X
February 9, 1965

...The only way to police a ghetto is to be oppressive. None of the Police Commissioner's men, even with the best will in the world, have any way of understanding the lives led by the people they swagger about in twos or threes controlling. Their very presence is an insult, and it would be, even if they spent their entire day feeding gumdrops to children. They represent the force of the white world, and that world's real intentions are, simply, for that world's criminal profit and ease, to keep the black man corralled up here, in his place. The badge, the gun in the holster, and the swinging billy club make vivid what will happen should insurrection become overt.

Madeline M. Engel
Inequality in America

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The Kerner Commission Report: 1967
The Formation of the Racial Ghettoes

Throughout the 20th century the Negro population has been moving steadily from rural areas to urban and from South to North and West. In 1910, 91% of the nation's 9.8 million Negroes lived in the South. In 1966, two generations later, this percentage had dropped to 55%. The total Negro population had more than doubled, reaching 21.5 million. In this same period of time, the percentage of the Negro population living in cities of 2,500 or more rose from 27% to 69%. Negro migration from the South had resulted from the expectation of thousands of new and highly paid jobs for unskilled workers in the North and the shift to mechanized farming in the South. However, the Negro migration is small when compared to earlier waves of European immigrants.

Although there have been gains in Negro income nationally, the condition of Negroes in the central city remains in a state of crisis. Between 16 and 20 percent of the total Negro population of all central cities live in squalor and deprivation in ghetto neighborhoods. (The term "ghetto" refers to an area within a city characterized by poverty and acute social disorganization, and inhabited by members of a racial or ethnic group under conditions of involuntary segregation.)

> ***This is the Negro revolution. We want the world to know.***
>
> Watts Community Member

Employment is a key problem. It not only controls the present for the Negro American but, in a most profound way, it is creating the future as well. Yet, despite continuing economic growth and declining national unemployment rates, the unemployment rate for Negroes in 1967 was more than double that for whites. Many of the jobs that are open to Negroes and other minorities are low-paying, unskilled or service jobs. The "subemployment rate," including both unemployment and underemployment, was about 33 percent, or 8.8 times greater than the overall unemployment rate for all United States workers.

> ***The only way we are going to stop this thing is to arrest, arrest, arrest.***
>
> William Parker
> L.A. Police Chief

Unemployment problems, aggravated by the constant arrival of new unemployed migrants, many of them from depressed rural areas, create persistent poverty in the ghetto. In 1966, about 11.9 percent of the nation's whites and 40.6 percent of its nonwhites were below the "poverty level."

The culture of poverty that results from unemployment and family breakup generates a system of ruthless, exploitative relationships within the ghetto.

TALLY SHEET ON RIOTS 1965-SEPTEMBER 8, 1967

	1965	1966	1967	TOTAL
Law Officers Killed	3	0	9	12
Law Officers Injured	186	271	742	1,199
Civilians Killed	33	10	75	118
Civilians Injured	1,020	196	1,208	2,424
Arrests	10,245	2,216	16,471	28,932
Convictions	2,074	1,199	2,161	5,434
Estimated Property Damage (in millions)	$40.0	$10.2	$160.4	$210.6

Prostitution, dope addiction, and crime create an environmental "jungle" characterized by personal insecurity and tension. Children growing up under such conditions are likely participants of civil disorder.

Crime rates in the ghetto, as much as 35 times as high as in high-income white districts, create a pronounced sense of insecurity. Poor health and sanitation conditions in the ghetto result in higher mortality rates, a higher incidence of major diseases, and lower availability and utilization of medical services. The infant mortality rate for non-white babies under the age of one month is 58 percent higher than for whites; for one to 12 months it is almost 300 percent higher. The level of sanitation in the ghetto is far below that in high income areas. Garbage collection is often inadequate. Of an estimated 14,000 cases of rat bite in the United States in 1965, most were in the ghetto. Nearly, two-thirds of all non-white families living in the central cities today live in neighborhoods marked with substandard housing and general urban blight.

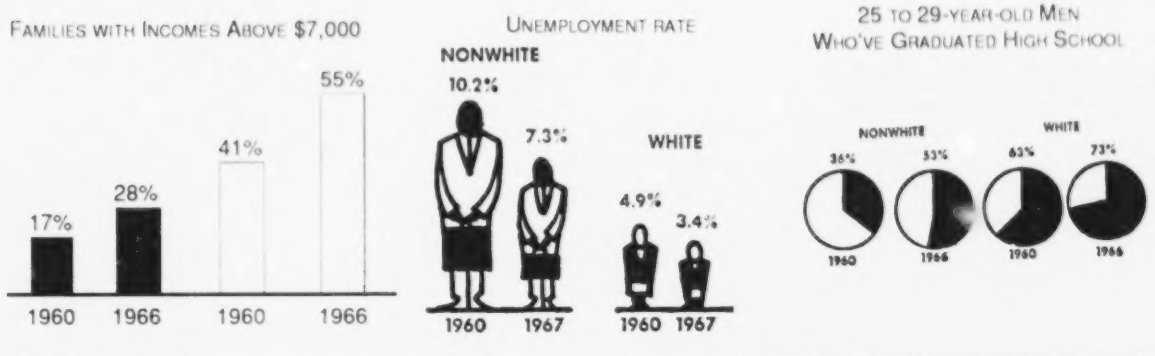
What white Americans have never fully understood — but what the Negro can never forget — is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it.

> ***It's Santo Domingo happening in Los Angeles. It's like a revolution. There are snipers everywhere. Any policeman is a good target.***
>
> Lieutenant Roderick Hill
> National Guard Commander

> ***You guys can stay here two weeks or more, but you'll have to leave sometime, and baby, it will happen again.***
>
> Watts Community Member

> ***The Johnson administration has been keeping a vigil over more than a score of U.S. cities to see where simmering Negro feelings threaten to boil over.***
>
> *Newsweek*,
> January 17th, 1966

State of the Nation



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A little rebellion now and then is a good thing....It is a medicine necessary for the sound health of government.

Thomas Jefferson, 1789

American Cauldron

Newark, July 1967

Between 1960 and 1967, from a total population of 400,000, 70,000 Whites left Newark. By 1967, Newark had a black majority population. 52%were black. 10% Puerto Rican and Cuban. 70% of the education system was black. But even with their majority, blacks were locked out of the political process. There were only two black members on the city council and board of education. In 1962, black politicians had formed an alliance with the Italian community to elect Hugh Addonizio mayor of Newark, ending a long history of Irish domination of the city's politics. But the conditions for blacks had continued to deteriorate. Police brutality had stepped up. The official unemployment rate for blacks was 12%. Housing in the black communities was dilapidated and rundown. The dropout rate was 33%. 6000 black youth between the ages of 16 and 19 were not in school. Newark had one of the highest crime rates of any U.S. city, concentrated in the largely black Central Ward.

All these conditions created an explosive situation in Newark. As Malcolm X said, "all the ingredients" were present for a massive rebellion. Two events of 1967 were to stir the black community and push one step further to lighting the fuse. One was when the secretary of the Board of Education got ready to resign. The black community proposed Newark's budget director, a black man with a masters degree from Howard University, as the replacement. The mayor refused and instead nominated a white with only a high school education. The struggle soon pitted the black community against the racist power structure of the city, and heated discussions pushed Board of Education meetings into the wee hours of the morning.

The other issue developed around the construction of a state medical and dental school in the predominantly black Central Ward, which the community saw as an attempt to dilute its political strength and perpetuate white control in a city with a black majority. The black community threatened violence if the city went through with its plans, and, together, with the School Board disagreement, this paralyzed the city planning board. Despite the mayor's attempt to cool things out by asking the outgoing chairman of the Board of Ed to stay on, several incidents between blacks and police broke out through the beginning of the summer.

But it was on July 12th that the straw to break the camel's back came. A forty year old black car driver named John Smith was stopped for tailgating a police car, beaten and arrested. At 9:30 pm that night, residents from the Reverend William P. Haynes Housing Project across from the police station saw Smith being dragged into the station. After the cab company was notified of Smith's arrest, cab drivers all over the city began talking about it over their radios.

By 10:30 a crowd was gathered outside the project in front of the police station. People were talking

about Smith's beating and other incidents of police brutality that had been occurring. A group of civil rights workers arrived to see Smith. As things grew tense and heated, an Inspector Melchoir asked two of the black spokesmen to go outside and pacify the crowd. After the two finished speaking, several molotov cocktails crashed against the wall of the police station. Against the black leaders' attempt to send people home while they investigated the incident, the crowd decided to march on City Hall. Before leaving though, rocks rained on the walls of the 4th precinct station, crashing windows all over. Police in World War II helmets attacked and within minutes stores were being looted.

The next evening the Spirit House called a rally against police brutality in front of the station. T.V. news cameras were there. The mayor sent a city human rights commission to cool things out. African American youth responded with shouts of "black power." Missiles and rocks brought the police station under siege. Liquor, drug, appliance, grocery stores down town were torched and looted. Guns were stolen from Sears and Roebuck. Over 7000 national guards were called in the following day to establish 'law and order,' and assisted police in setting up 137 roadblocks.

Despite Governor Hughes' call for the "maximum sentence" for snipers, the black community fought a tit for tat battle with the police and national guard, using hit and run tactics and sniper fire. The police and guard were said to fire at anyone black with unparalleled savagery, whether on the streets or in their homes. At 11 a.m., Sunday, July 16th, Mrs Lucille Pugh looked out of the window to see if the streets were clear. She then asked her 11-year-old son Michael to take the garbage out. As he reached the street and was illuminated by a street light, a shot rang out. He died. Twenty one blacks, including two children, 6 women and seventy-three year old Isaac Harrison, were killed.

Record Shop Owner, age 42
Eyewitness

SAC, Albany August 25, 1967
PERSONAL ATTENTION TO ALL OFFICES

Director, FBI
COUNTERINTELLIGENCE PROGRAM
BLACK NATIONALIST - HATE GROUPS
INTERNAL SECURITY

...The purpose of this new counterintelligence endeavor is to expose, disrupt, misdirect, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalist hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership, and supporters....The activities of all such groups of intelligence interest to the Bureau must be followed on a continuous basis so we will be in a position to promptly take advantage of all opportunities for counterintelligence and to inspire action in instances where circumstances warrant. The pernicious background of such groups, their duplicity, and devious maneuvers must be exposed to public scrutiny where such publicity will have a neutralizing effect…an effort should be made to capitalize upon existing conflicts between competing black nationalist organizations. When an opportunity is apparent to disrupt or neutralize [these] organizations through the cooperation of established local news media or through such contact with sources available to the Seat of Government, in every instance careful attention must be given to the proposal to insure the targeted group is disrupted, ridiculed, or discredited through the publicity and not merely publicized.

…under no circumstances should the existence of the program be made known outside the Bureau…

3/4/68

COUNTERINTELLIGENCE PROGRAM
BLACK NATIONALIST - HATE GROUPS
INTERNAL SECURITY

GOALS

1. Prevent the coalition of militant black nationalist groups. In unity there is strength.…

2 Prevent the rise of a "messiah"…Malcolm X might have been such a "messiah;" he is the martyr of the movement today. Martin Luther King, Stockley Carmichael and Elijah Muhammed all aspire to this position. Elijah Muhammad is less of a threat because of his age. King could be a very real contender for this position should he abandon his supposed "obedience" to "white, liberal doctrines" (nonviolence) and embrace black nationalism. Carmichael has the necessary charisma to be a real threat in this way.

3. Prevent violence…

4. Prevent [such groups] from gaining respectability…

5. …prevent [their] long range growth…especially among youth…

Reading for Understanding

What causes does the Kerner Commission Report identify for the riots?

Why did the Commission decide that "white racism is essentially responsible" for the explosive situation in cities?

Do you think William Parker, LA Police Chief, quoted on page 38, is right? What role do you think the police should play in a riot?

Turn all of the statistics from the Kerner Commission and the Newark piece into graphs.

What were the two events in Newark, 1967, that raised tensions between the community and the city political structures?

What events in the Dominican Republic does the National Guard Commander refer to in the quote on page 39?

What does counterintelligence mean?

What is the objective of the counterintelligence program of the FBI based on?

Why is there an emphasis on "capitalizing on existing conflict between existing black nationalist organizations"?

Why do you think the last sentence of the 1967 memo is there?

Which of the five goals listed in the 1968 memo do you think was the most important to the FBI? Why?

Questions for Research

What specific program does the Kerner Commission Report come to for the immediate future? Compare this program to the program of the Organization of African American Unity. In a small group design a program that you think addresses the requirements of your community.

In what ways are the mass media responsible for Afro-American conditions? for attitudes about themselves? about Whites? for Whites' attitudes toward African Americans? about themselves?

What is the reason the Commission finds for African Americans' turn away from integration to Black separatism? What do you think is generally the current African American sentiment on integration? What do *you* think?

There were many editorials in magazines and newspapers in the March of 1968 that responded to the commission's findings. Find some. Which ones do you agree with? disagree with? How are they different from the responses to 1992's riot?

Malcolm predicted that the summer of 1965 would be the longest and hottest ever. Did events bear his prediction out?

What organizations did the individuals mentioned in the FBI memos belong to? What happened to these organizations and individuals?

Looking at Charts

BLACKS AND THE LAW

	BLACKS	WHITES
% of Population	12%	85%
Federal Judges	22	437
State & Municipal Judges	178	12,000*
300,000 Lawyers	2%	98%
Death Penalty	53.5%	46.5%
Prison Population	35%*	65%*

* Estimated

Convert all figures into percentages and turn each pair into pie charts.

How can we account for these differences in proportions of blacks to whites in the justice system? Think of factors that might account for all disproportionate numbers (compared to population).

Justice in America is portrayed as a lady blindfolded holding scales that balance. Justice is the symbol of fairness and equality for all Americans. From the information in this chart, can we say that justice is colorblind? Why or why not?

Can we assume from the figures that a black could not get fair treatment under the law?

Think of and research other information that might give you a clearer picture: juries, police, prosecutors, other racial groups.

Listening to the Present

"When I see a white policeman, I'm genuinely worried, because I'm never sure how he will react."

Junior College President

"A lot of police don't like colored people, period."

Office Worker, age 49

"My wife was even robbed coming back from the store...she came upstairs crying to me. What could I do? Where was the police? Where is the protection?

Man, age 33

"I want to be a policeman, I think I'd be better than some white policeman because he's leading the good life out there on Long Island and he comes here and tells the people what to do."

Vietnam Vet

What major idea is found in all four quotes? Is it justified?

How might you account for this attitude?

Do you agree with the man in the fourth quote that a white police from Long Island can't relate to people in the ghetto??

What do you suggest to improve relations between police and community?

Write some opinions of
white people about white cops?
white people about black cops?
Black people about black cops?

James Baldwin:
Notes on Housing Projects and Police

The projects in Harlem are hated. They are hated almost as much as policemen, and this is saying a great deal. And they are hated for the same reason: both reveal, unbearably, the real attitude of the white world, no matter how many lofty editorials are written, no matter how many civil rights commissions are set up.

Harlem got its first private project. Riverton — which is now naturally, a slum — about twelve years ago because at that time Negroes were not allowed to live in Stuyvesant Town. Harlem watched Riverton go up, therefore, in the most violent bitterness of spirit, and hated it long before the bullets arrived. They began hating it at about the time people began moving our of their condemned houses to make room for this additional proof of how thoroughly the white world despised them. And they had scarcely moved in, naturally, before they began smashing windows, defacing walls, urinating in the elevators, and fornicating in the playgrounds. Liberals, both white and black, were appalled by the spectacle. I was appalled by the liberal innocence — or cynicjsm, which comes out in practice as much the same thing. Other people were delighted to be able to point to proof positive that nothing could be done to better the lot of the colored people. They were right in one respect; that nothing can be done as long as they are treated like colored people. The people in Harlem know they are living there because white people do not think they are good enough to live anywhere else. No amount of "improvement" can sweeten this fact. Whatever money is now being earmarked to improve this, or any other ghetto, might as well be burnt. A ghetto can be improved in one way only: out of existence.

Reading for Understanding

According to Baldwin, why is the ghetto hated?

What evidence does he give to support his argument?

Has the ghetto changed since 1960 when this was written?

What does Baldwin say is the the primary purpose of the ghetto? How would you go about testing this?

What would Baldwin propose as an alternative? What would you propose?

Programs for Black Self-Determination

I swear this oath —America will be!

BASICALLY, THERE ARE TWO KINDS of power that count in America: economic and political, with social power deriving from the two. In order for the Afro-Americans to control their destiny, they must be able to control and affect the decisions which control their destiny: economic, political, and social. This can only be done through organization.

From the Charter of the Organization of Afro-American Unity

Establishment

The [OAAU] shall include all people of African descent in the Western Hemisphere, as well as our brothers and sisters of the African continent.

Self Defense

Since self-preservation is the first law of nature, we assert the Afro-American's right of self-defense.

The Constitution of the United States of America clearly affirms the right of every American citizen to bear arms. And as Americans, we will not give up a single right guaranteed under the Constitution. The history of unpunished violence against our people clearly indicates that we must be prepared to defend ourselves....

We assert that in those areas where the government is either unable or unwilling to protect the lives and property of our people, that our people are within their rights to protect themselves by any means necessary....

Tactics based solely on morality can only succeed when you are dealing with a basically moral people or a moral system. A man or system which oppresses a man because of his color is not moral....

Education

Education is an important element in the struggle for Human Rights. It is the means to help our children and people rediscover their identity and thereby increase self-respect....

We must establish all over the country schools of our own to train our children to become scientists and mathematicians...

Politics-Economics

The [OAAU] will organize the Afro-American community block by block to make the community aware of its power and potential: we will start immediately a voter-registration drive to make every unregistered voter in the Afro-American community an Independent voter....

Economic exploitation in the Afro-American community is the most vicious form practiced on any people in America: twice as much rent for rat-infested, roach-crawling, rotting tenements; the Afro-American pays more for foods, clothing, insurance rates and so forth. The [OAAU] will wage an unrelenting struggle against these evils....

Social

This organization is responsible only to the Afro-American people and community and will function only with their support, both financially and numerically. We believe that our communities must be the sources of their own strength politically, intellectually and culturally in the struggle for Human Rights and Dignity.

Culture

"A race of people is like an individual man; until it uses its own talent, takes pride in its own history, expresses its own culture, affirms its own selfhood, it can never fulfill itself."

...We must recapture our heritage and our identity if we are ever to liberate ourselves from the bonds of white supremacy. We must launch a cultural revolution to unbrainwash an entire people.

Our cultural revolution must be the means of bringing us closer to our African brothers and sisters. It must begin in the community and be based on community participation....

This cultural revolution will be the journey to our rediscovery of ourselves. History is a people's memory, and without a memory man is demoted to the lower animals.

From the Black Panthers' Ten Point Plan

1. We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black Community.

We believe that black people will not be free until we are able to determine our destiny.

2. We want full employment for our people.

We believe that the federal government is responsible and obligated to give every man employment or a guaranteed income. We believe that if the white American businessmen will not give full employment, then the means of production should be taken from the businessmen and placed in the community so that the people of the community can organize and employ all of its people and give a high standard of living.

3. We want an end to the robbery by the CAPITALIST of our Black Community.

We believe that this racist government has robbed us and now we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules. Forty acres and two mules was promised 100 years ago as restitution for slave labor and mass murder of black people. We will accept the payment in currency which will be distributed to our many communities.

4. We want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings.

5. We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society.

We believe in an educational system that will give to our people a knowledge of self. If a man does not have knowledge of himself and his position in society and the world, then he has little chance to relate to anything else.

6. We want all black men to be exempt from military service.

We believe that Black people should not be forced to fight in the military service to defend a racist government that does not protect us. We will not fight and kill other people of color in the world who, like black people, are being victimized by the white racist government of America. We will protect ourselves from the force and violence of the racist police and racist military, by whatever means necessary.

7. We want an immediate end to POLICE BRUTALITY and MURDER of black people.

We believe we can end police brutality in our black community by organizing black self-defense groups that are dedicated to defending our black community from racist police oppression and brutality. The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States gives a right to bear arms. We therefore believe that all black people should arm themselves for self-defense.

8. We want freedom for all black men [and people] held in federal, state, county and city prisons and jails...because they have not received a fair and impartial trial.

9. We want all black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer group, or people from their black communities, as defined by the [14th Amendment of] the US Constitution....A peer is a person from a similar economic, social, religious, geographical, environmental, historical and racial background. To do this the court will be forced to select a jury from from the black community from which the black defendant came. We have been, and are being tried by all-white juries that have no understanding of the "average reasoning man" of the black community.

10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace. And as our major political objective, a United Nations-supervised plebiscite to be held throughout the black colony in which only black colonial subjects will be allowed to participate, for the purpose of determining the will of black people as to their national destiny.

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation....

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From the Program of the Nation Of Islam

What the Muslims Want

1. We want freedom. We want a full and complete freedom.

2. We want justice. Equal justice under the law. We want justice applied equally to all, regardless of creed or class or color.

3. We want equality of opportunity. We want equal membership in society with the best in civilized society.

4. We want our people in America whose parents or grandparents were descendents from slaves, to be allowed to establish a separate state or territory of their own — either on this continent or elsewhere....

5. We want freedom for all Believers of Islam now held in federal prisons....

6. We want an immediate end to the police brutality and mob attacks against the so-called Negro throughout the US....

7. As long as we are not allowed to establish a state...of our own, we demand not only equal justice...but equal employment opportunities — NOW!

We do not believe that after 400 years of free or nearly free labor, sweat and blood, which has helped America become rich and powerful, that so many thousands of black people should have to subsist on relief, charity or live in poor houses.

8. We want the government of the US ti exempt our people from ALL taxation as long as we are deprived or equal justice under the laws of the land.

9. We want equal education — but separate schools up to 16 for boys and 18 for girls....We want all black children educated, taught and trained by their own teachers....The Muslim teachers shall be left free to teach and train their people in the way of righteousness, decency and self-respect.

10. We believe that intermarriage or race mixing should be prohibited.

Questions for Thought

Where does the last passage of the Panthers' Program come from?

Identify the goals and purposes of each program. How are they different and how are they similar?

Which points are you most in agreement with? Most in disagreement?

How are each of the points related to the practical and political conditions of the black community?

Draw up a program to resolve the problems in your community that exist today. Develop your plan drawing on the institutions, leadership and membership of your community. What *new* resources would you have to develop? How would your plan be different from those here? What would be the similarities?

Choose one institution or business that *you* personally want to develop and answer the following questions:

- How many jobs will it create? What kinds of skills will they require? Will they be stable?
- Where will the employees come from? Will the project reproduce existing power relations or construct new ones? How?
- What products or services will be provided?
- How will it sustain itself financially? What will happen to the financial resources generated?
- What will salaries be?
- What are the ecological issues?

Conclusion

Malcolm X maintained an unflinching capacity to "think and reappraise" his own positions and beliefs.

> ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS...young people, especially nowadays, should learn is how to see for yourself and listen for yourself and think for yourself. Then you can come to an intelligent decision for yourself ....The most important thing that we can learn to do today is think for ourselves....if you form the habit of taking what someone else says about a thing without checking it out for yourself, you'll find that other people will have you hating your friends and loving your enemies.
>
> December 31, 1964

When I told [the Algerian ambassador] that my political, social and economic philosophy was Black nationalism, he asked me very frankly, well, where did that leave him? Because he was white. He was an African, but he was an Algerian, and to all appearances, he was a white man. And he said if I define my objective as the victory of Black nationalism, where does that leave him? Where does that leave revolutionaries in Morocco, Egypt, Iraq, Mauritania? So he showed me where I was alienating people who were true revolutionaries dedicated to overturning the system of exploitation that exists on this earth by any means necessary.

So I had to do a lot of thinking and reappraising of my definition of Black nationalism. Can we sum up the solution to the problems confronting our people as Black nationalism. And if you notice, I haven't been using the expression for several months. But I still would be hard pressed to give a specific definition of the overall philosophy which I think is necessary for the liberation of the black people in this country.

1964

At the bottom of the social heap is the black man in the big-city ghetto. He lives night and day with the rats and cockroaches and drowns himself with alcohol and anesthetizes himself with dope, to tries and forget where and what he is. That Negro has given up all hope. He's the hardest one for us to reach, because he's the deepest in the mud. But when you get him, you've got the best kind of Muslim. Because he makes the most drastic change. He's the most fearless. He will stand the longest. He has nothing to lose, not even his life, because he didn't have that in the first place. I look upon myself as a prime example of this category — and as graphic an example as you could find of the salvation of the black man.

May 1963

For twelve long years I lived within the narrow-minded confines of the "strait-jacket world" created by my strong belief that Elijah Muhammad was a messenger direct from God Himself, and my faith in what I now see to be a pseudo-religious philosophy that he preaches. But as his then most faithful disciple, I represented and defended him at all levels... and in most instances, even beyond the level of intellect and reason.

I shall never rest until I have undone the harm I did to so many well-meaning, innocent Negroes who through my own evangelistic zeal now believe in him even more fanatically and more blindly than I did.

If Western society had not gone to such extremes to block out the knowledge of True Islam there would not be such a religious "vacuum" among American Negroes into which any religious faker can bring all forms of distorted religious concoctions and represent it to our unsuspecting people as True Islam.

I declare emphatically that I am no longer in Elijah Muhammad's "strait jacket," and I don't intend to replace his with one woven by someone else. I am a Muslim in the most orthodox sense; my religion is Islam as it is believed in and practiced by the Muslims here in the Holy City of Mecca.

This religion recognizes all men as brothers. It accepts all human beings as equals before God, and as equal members in the Human Family of Mankind. I totally reject Elijah Muhammad's racist philosophy, which he has labeled "Islam" only to fool and misuse gullible people as he fooled and misused me. But I blame only myself, and no one else for the fool that I was, and the harm that my evangelic foolishness in his behalf has done to others.

September 1964

I am not a racist, and I do not subscribe to any of the tenets of racism. But the seed of racism has been firmly planted in the hearts of most American Whites ever since the beginning of that country. The seed of racism has rooted itself so deeply into the subconsciousness of many American Whites that they themselves ofttimes are not even aware of its existence, but it can be easily detected in their thoughts, their words, and in their deeds.

In the past I permitted myself to be used by Elijah Muhammad, the leader of the sect known as the Black Muslims, to make sweeping indictments of all white people, the entire white race, and these generalizations have caused injuries to some Whites who perhaps did not deserve to be hurt. Because of the spiritual enlightenment which I was blessed to receive as the result of my recent pilgrimage to the Holy City of Mecca, I no longer subscribe to sweeping indictments of any one race.

...The first law of nature is self-preservation, so my first concern is with the oppressed group of people to which I belong, the 22 million Afro-Americans, for we, more than any other people on earth today, are deprived of these inalienable *human rights*.

....I believe in the brotherhood of man, all men, but I don't believe in brotherhood with anybody who doesn't want brotherhood with me. I believe in treating people right, but I'm not going to waste my time trying to treat somebody right who doesn't know how to return that treatment. This is the only difference between you and me.

You believe in treating everybody right whether they put a rope around your neck or whether they put you in the grave. Well, my belief isn't that strong. I believe in the brotherhood of man, but I think that anybody who wants to lynch a Negro is not qualified for that brotherhood and I don't put forth any effort to get them into that brotherhood. You want to save him and I don't.

Egyptian Gazette
August 25, 1964

There are those that have accused me of being a racist. I am not a racist in any way, shape, or form, and I believe in taking an uncompromising stand against any forms of segregation and discrimination that are based on race. I myself do not judge a man by the color of his skin. The yardstick that I use to judge a man is his deeds, his behavior, his intentions. And the press has very skillfully projected me in the image of a racist simply because I take an uncompromising stand against the racism that exists in the United States. I think it is an injustice, not only to me, but to the French public, or whatever public, that is being misled in this way by the press, especially at a time when efforts are being made by well-meaning people to bring the various racial sections together in trying to create an atmosphere of better understanding.

February 1965

What were Minister Malcolm and the Nation of Islam's theory of race and racism? How did this effect Malcolm's black nationalist philosophy and his outlook on alliance within and outside the black community? How did this change for Malcolm in his last year?

What does Malcolm X mean when he says he "represented and defended Elijah Muhammad...beyond the level of intelligence and reason"? Have you ever believed in someone or something so strongly? When?

What does he say his religion is now? How is it different from before?

Why do you think it was necessary for Malcolm to apologize for leading thousands of blacks into the "straight jacket" of the Black Muslim philosophy? Had he lived long enough, do you think that he would have converted many of those who he had won over to Elijah Muhammad, over to the religion of true Islam?

Malcolm X says he is "not a racist. ...But..." What do you infer from all that follows? Why does he say "but"?

In his article from the *Egyptian Gazette*, how does he differentiate himself from "you"? What can we infer that he considers common ground with this person? Who do you think he's talking to?

From the *Random House Dictionary of the English Language*: :

> **racism 1.** A belief that human races have distinctive characteristics that determine their respective cultures, usually involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to rule others. **2.** A policy of enforcing such asserted right. **3.** A system of government and society based upon it.

The press misread Malcolm's deeds as showing he was a racist. What is the difference between the media"s idea of a racist and Malcolm X's? What do you think?

Keep Thinking

Explore the autobiographical process. Read other autobiographies. Write your own.

Consider how actively creative is the act of telling a story — even a "factual" one. Choose a vivid memory of something that happened in your family or with a friend. Write it up in detail: what everyone said, facial expressions, gestures — everything. Then, without any discussion of the memory, get someone who was also there to do the same thing. Compare the two memories. They might be completely different. They will definitely be different at least in the language that each of you use to describe what happened. How do the two accounts differ? What do you agree on? Think about why you saw things differently. Using the quotes from Malcolm X's later life, find a situation in the autobiography that he might have seen differently in his last years.

Manning Marable has said that Alex Haley's philosophy, much more integrationist than Malcolm's, must have affected his ability to represent Malcolm's narration. Think of examples of what he might mean. Do you agree? Can you find places in the *Autobiography* where you can see Haley's hand?

Discuss the changes in American society since the deaths of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr.

How did Malcolm react to the news of Elijah Muhammad's moral failing? Have you ever experienced similar anguish? When? How did you recover? Did it change you?

What is the link between pride in one's racial being and the desire to be a human being?

Chart Malcolm's struggle against the yoke of internalized racism to his self-recovery. Identify the role that the Nation of Islam played in this development.

List the factors that would cause a young person of Malcolm's generation to hate themself. Do these factors still exist?

What is the relation between internalized racism and the larger society?

Do any of your textbooks talk about Malcolm X? about the Nation of Islam? What do they say?

Why do you think the NOI was so effective in organizing people like Malcolm? professional people?

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A Chronology of Malcolm X's Life

1925 Malcolm Little born to Louise and Reverend Earl Little in Omaha Nebraska.

1929 Ku Klux Klan sets fire to the family's house; they move to Lansing Michigan.

1931 Reverend Little is found dead on trolley tracks, his head beaten in.

1938 ML is expelled from school and placed in a detention home; soon after he enrolls in the local junior high where he is elected class president and rises to third in his class.

1940 ML moves to live in Boston with his sister; finds work as shoeshine boy and soda jerk.

1941 ML moves to Harlem and starts work at Small's Paradise, a nightclub, after being fired from his railroad job.

1942 ML, now Detroit Red, becomes a street hustler.

1944 DR begins burglary ring in Boston.

1945 DR is arrested for possession of a stolen watch.

1946 DR starts ten-year term for robbery.

1947 DR begins program of self-education by copying the dictionary word for word and advancing to Latin, philosophy, science, history, linguistics.

1948 He is transferred to Norfolk prison, which had a large library.

1949 He begins to correspond with Elijah Muhammad; joins the Nation of Islam and changes his name to Malcolm X.

1952 MX gets paroled from prison.

1953 MX gets a job with the Ford Motor Company in Detroit and in three months triples the membership of the Nation of Islam Temple.

1954 MX is appointed minister for the NOI's Harlem Temple where he preaches seven nights a week and gives adult education night classes.

1956 MX meets Betty X, a nurse and teacher at the Harlem Temple.

1957 MX forms 2 dozen congregations nationwide and founds the newspaper, *Mohammad Speaks*.

1958 MX and Betty marry and have Attilah, the fist of their 6 daughters.

1959 MX Travels to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Nigeria, Ghana.

1961 Elijah Muhammad retires to Arizona for health reasons and MX assumes his public duties.

1962 MX is appointed national minister for the NOI.

1963 JFK is assassinated, and, when he states at an NOI rally that the chickens have "come home to roost," MX is silenced by the NOI for 30 days.

1964 MX makes his first pilgrimage to Mecca and takes the name El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz. He breaks with the NOI after confronting Elijah Muhammad about his alleged adultery and founds the Muslim Mosque, Inc. and the Organization of Afro-American Unity. During a 5-month speaking tour of Africa, he meets with heads of state in Egypt, Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, Tanzania, and Guinea.

1965 His home in Queens is firebombed and a week later MX is assassinated while speaking at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem.

Make Your Own Timelines

Make you own timeline for what you think are the important events in Malcolm X's life.

Make a timeline illustrated with points of transition for Malcolm X; for your own life. For you mother or fathers life.

Make a timeline for the events described in the scene from Newark in 1967.

Make a timeline for important national events from the time of Malcolm X's birth to the present; of international events.

Learn Like Malcolm X

Make Your Studies Comparative

Compare Martin Luther King or The Black Panthers with Malcolm X on:

Integration
Religion
Electoral Politics
Women
The International Scene

Explore the conflict between Malcolm X & Elijah Muhammad.

See Spike Lee's movie version of the *Autobiography;* what does Lee choose to include and to leave out; what is different from the *Autobiography*? Why would Lee have changed these things?

Compare actual speeches with media interpretations: for example, his reaction to John F. Kennedy's death as portrayed in newspapers and TV news; watch Mike Wallace's *The Hate that Hate Produced.*

Compare Malcolm's solutions to the social and economic conditions before and after his first trip to Mecca in April of 1964.

Compare Malcolm X at different stages of his life with characters from literature. For example: in Taylor Gordon's autobiography, *Born to Be,* how does the author respond to his own journy from the rural West to the urban East Coast? How are his experiences similar? How are his responses different? In Richard Wright's *Native Son,* how is Bigger Thomas's fate different from Malcolm's? What happened to Malcolm to save him from Bigger's fate?

Make Your Studies Interactive

Find political cartoons of Malcolm X from the 1960s.

Look at TV or printed advertisements in terms of their racial connotations: for example, Bennetton commercials. Compare the portrayals of blacks with those of whites.

Put together word/image/concept lists: Nationalism, Islam, racism, wolves, zoot, economic-social power, Civil Rights, Integration. Act out the word lists, or represent them pictorially with drawings, collages, cartoons. Explain the picture: why did you make decisions you made.

Draw pictures of black life in the US in the '20s, in the '50s in the late '60s, in the '90s. Find music from each of these eras.

Look at rap music: How is Malcolm X portrayed now? Listen to music, get all references to him from songs. What does a song have to say about the issues Malcolm X considered.

Write: Forums, letters, sermons, speeches, rap songs, FBI memos.

Recite Malcolm X's speeches from different stages: convey feeling as well as meaning.

A Small Resource List

Articles

"Playboy Interview: Malcolm X." *Playboy*, May 1963

"Angry Spokesman Malcolm X Tells off Whites." *Life*, May 31, 1963.

"X on the Spot." *Newsweek*, December 16, 1963.

"Malcolm X Splits with Muhammad." The New York Times account of the split, March 9, 1964.

"Malcolm's Brand X." *Newsweek*, March 23, 1964

"Miami Notebook: Cassius Clay and Malcolm X." George Plimpton, *Harper's*, June 1964.

"Mystery of Malcolm X." Hans J Massaquoi, *Ebony*, September 1964.

Malcolm X Obituary, *The New York Times*, February 22, 1965.

"Violent End of the Man Called Malcolm X." Gordon Parks, *Life*, March 5, 1965.

"Who was Malcolm X?" Charles W Wiley, *National Review*, March 23, 1965.

The Meaning of Malcolm X." C Eric Lincoln, *Christian Century*, April 7, 1965.

"Violence vs. Non-Violence." Editorial, *Ebony*, April 1965.

"Malcolm X: Nothing But a Man." Wyatt T Walker, *Negro Digest*, August 1965.

"Malcolm the Martyr." Clarence Major, *Negro Digest*, December 1966.

"Malcolm X." Betty Shabazz. *Ebony*, 1969.

"Brother Malcolm and the Black Revolution." W Keorapetse Kgositsile, *Negro Digest*, November 1969.

Books

George Breitman, Herman Porter and Baxter Smith. *The Assassination of Malcolm X*. New York: Pathfinder Press, 1976.

George Breitman. *The Last Year of Malcolm X, The Evolution of a Revolutionary*.. New York: Merit Publishers, 1967.

John Henrik Clarke (ed). *Malcolm X: The Man and His Times*.. Trenton: Africa World Press, 1969.

Archie Epps (ed)*The Speeches of Malcolm X at Harvard*. New York: William Morrow and Co., Inc., 1968.

Peter Goldman. *The Death and Life of Malcolm X*. London: Harper and Row, 1974.

Benjamin Goodman. *The End of White World Supremacy, Four Speeches of Malcolm X*. New York: Merlin House, 1971.

Malcolm X (with the assistance of Alex Haley). *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* New York: Grove Press, 1965.

Malcolm X. *By Any Means Necessary* (edited by George Breitman). New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970.

Malcolm X. *Malcolm X Speaks*. (edited by George Breitman). London: Secker and Warburg, 1966.

Malcolm X. *Malcolm X On Afro-American History*. New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970.

And...

Malcolm X Lovers Network. Contact: Preston Wilcox. 2322 3rd Ave, 2nd floor, New York, New York, 10035. (212) 289-9155. This center collects and disseminates a variety of materials on Malcolm X.

Malcolm X and 1199. Full color 18" x 24" poster with illustrated article on reverse side. Available from **Bread & Roses**, 330 W. 42nd Street, New York, New York, 10036. (212) 947-1944

An African American History Quiz

Part I

(Answers on page 57)

Fill in the Blanks

_____ 1. Founder of Bethel church in Philadelphia, the first African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States.

_____ 2. The legal status of children born to free mothers before the Civil War.

_____ 3. President Abraham Lincoln's 1863 document that declared all slaves in rebellious areas be free.

_____ 4. The author of, among numerous other works, *The suppression of the African Slave Trade*, which is the first scientific historical monograph written by a Black man.

_____ 5. Black newspaper, published in New York by A Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen, that refused to give all-out support to World War I.

_____ 6. Most successful black union of the post-WWI period, founded by A Philip Randolph.

_____ 7. Founder of the Association for the Study of Negro Life.

_____ 8. Term applied to the summer of 1919 because of the number and intensity of race riots.

_____ 9. Egyptian scholar and physician who, having described the circulation of blood 4000 years before any European, is called the "real father of medicine."

_____ 10. Black township outside Johannesburg, South Africa, where bloody rioting was the response in 1976 to the compulsory use of the Africaans language in the schools.

True or False

___ 1. Queen Ann Nzinga, the Angolan leader during the 1600s, successfully resisted colonization by England for 40 years.

___ 2. Liberia was founded in West Africa in 1822 by African Americans of the American Colonization Society.

___ 3. Jomo Kenyatta led Nigeria to independence from British colonialism.

___ 4. The Puritans were the first religious organization to sign an anti-slavery resolution in 1688.

___ 5. In 1619, 20 black indentured servants arrived in Jamestown, Virginia, marking the beginning of the Atlantic Slave Trade.

___ 6. In 1829 John Brown published a militant anti-slavery pamphlet, *Appeal to the Colored People of the World*, and succeeded in distributing it throughout the country.

___ 7. Adam Clayton Powell, the son of a Harlem minister, pushed through a lot of civil rights legislation as New York Senator.

___ 8. Jesse owens won 4 gold medals in the Olympics in Mexico City in 1956.

___ 9. Beginning about 1900 repeated devastations of Southern cotton crops by locusts contributed to the Black migration North.

___ 10. Mathew Henson, the first westerner to reach the North Pole, was favored by the eskimos because of his dark complexion.

Identify or Define

griot
slave code
Maroons
quilombos
asiento
antebellum

Freedom's Journal
PBS Pinchback
Jim Crow Laws
April 4, 1968
Lincoln University
Father Divine

Papal Line of Demarcation (1493)
the Commercial Revolution
Jean Baptiste du Sable
Toussaint L'Ouverture
Frederick Jackson Turner
Manifest Destiny

An African American History Quiz

Part II

(Answers on page 57)

Fill in the Blanks

_____ 1. The first Black newspaper published in the US.

_____ 2. Caribbean nation to which Frederick Douglass served as US Minister in 1889.

_____ 3. Free blacks were required to carry this document in most states.

_____ 4. Leader of a 2-day slave insurrection that rocked the area of Southhampton, Virginia in 1831.

_____ 5. 1857 Supreme Court Decision that opened federal territory to slavery, denied citizenship rights to African Americans, and decreed that slaves do not become free when taken into free territory.

_____ 6. Black self-help society organized by Richard Allen and Absolom Jones in Philadelphia in 1787.

_____ 7. Terrorist group begun in 1865 in Tennessee with the express purpose of reasserting white supremacy and limiting the influence of the Union in the South.

_____ 8. The Southern state that was the leading center of the UNIA

_____ 9. Institution where George Washington Carver developed major improvements in farm crops, and methods.

_____ 10. Legendary African American cowboy nicknamed Deadwood Dick for his bronco busting , calf-roping and riding technique.

True or False

___ 1. The Seminole nation offered refuge to fugitive slaves, intermarried with them and fought with them against the US in a series of wars in the mid 1800s.

___ 2. Frederick Douglass first published his abolitionist newspaper, *The North Star*, in Philadelphia in 1837.

___ 3. In 1912, Marcus Garvey founded UNIA, which grew to 4 million members and with a newspaper and shipping line among its many enterprises, became one of the largest and most influential organizations in the African world.

___ 4. Carl Stokes became the first African American mayor of a major American city in 1967 when he was elected in Los Angeles.

___ 5. Shirley Chisolm became the first African American woman to sit in the US House of Representatives in 1969.

___ 6. In 1935, African American chemist Dr Percy Julian developed a drug for the treatment of polio.

___ 7. Jan Matzeliger invented a machine for the production of shoes in 1863 that all industry experts had claimed was impossible to make.

___ 8. In 1894 Booker T Washington became the first African American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard University.

___ 9. Gwendolyn Brooks became the first African American to win a Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1950.

___ 10. Paul Robeson, artist, athlete, singer, actor, shocked the government in 1949 by speaking out against the African American war effort on behalf of a racist society.

Identify or Define

Plessy vs Ferguson	*Amistad*
Harlem Renaissance	Marriage/Divorce
de facto	Matriarchy/Patriarchy
Equal pay for equal work	Sterilization/Abortion
Family	Reconstruction
The Reconstruction Act	Haile Selassie
Motherhood/Fatherhood	Olduvai Gorge
Sexism	Crispus Attuks

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_____	Free	materials catalogue

Answers

PART I: FILL IN THE BLANKS 1. Richard Allen 2. Free 3. WEB DuBois 4. *Messenger* 5. Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Maids 7. Carter G Woodson 8. Red Summer 9. Imhotep 10. Soweto

TRUE OR FALSE 1. F: Portugal 2. T 3. F: Kenya 4. F: Quakers 5. T 6. F: David Walker 7. F: Representative 8. F: Berlin, 1936 9. F: Boll weevil 10. T

PART II: FILL IN THE BLANKS 1. *Freedom's Journal* 2. Haiti 3. Certificate of Freedom 4. Nat Turner 5. Dred Scott decision 6. Free Africa Society 7. Ku Klux Klan 8. Lousiana 9. Tuskegee 10. Nat Love

TRUE OR FALSE 1. T 2. F: New York, 1847 3. T 4. F: Cleveland, OH 5. T 6. F: glaucoma 7. T 8. F: WEB DuBois 9. T 10. T

We Afro-Americans feel receptive toward all peoples of good-will. We are not opposed to multiethnic associations in any walk of life. In fact, we have had experiences which enable us to understand how unfortunate it is that human beings have been set apart or aside from each other because of characteristics known as "racial" characteristics.

However, Afro-Americans did not create the prejudiced background and atmosphere in which we live. And we must face the facts. A "racial" society does exist in stark reality, and not with equality for black people so we who are nonwhite must meet the problems inherited from centuries of inequalities and deal with the present situations as rationally as we are able.

The exclusive ethnic quality of our unity is necessary for self-preservation. We say this because our experiences backed up by history show that African culture and Afro-American culture will not be accurately recognized and reported and cannot be respectably expressed nor be secure in its survival if we remain the divided, and therefore helpless, victims of an oppressive society.

We appreciate the fact that when the people involved have real equality and justice, ethnic intermingling can be beneficial to all. We must denounce, however, all people who are oppressive through their policies or actions and who are lacking in justice in their dealings with other people, whether the injustices proceed from power, class, or "race." We must be unified in order to be protected from abuse or misuse.

1965